**METRO** / A17

**BFAD testing 861 more**
Chinese products including cosmetics, toothpaste

**WORLD** / A20

**200 feared dead**
in Brazil's deadliest air crash

**BUSINESS** / B5

**Dow Jones board**
approves Murdoch $5-B takeover

**NEWS** / A5

**Fruity metaphors**
all mixed up at Trillanes' hearing

**ACROSS** / A13

**Troops in Basilan say**
they don't know much about antiterror law

PHILIPPINE DAILY
# INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, July 19, 2007 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 221 P18 website: w

## US Congress seeks safer, but not safe, cigarettes

WASHINGTON—THE US government agency charged with keeping food and drugs from harming people may soon be asked to take a consumer product that kills more than 400,000 people a year and make it safer.

US CONGRESS/ A8

## Strunk broke, lived in shelters, says friend

By Alcuin Papa

DESTITUTE AND PROBABLY DESPERATE IN HIS last days, Rod Strunk tried to reach out to a friend before he killed himself, according to a news website in Tracy, California.

Quoting his closest friend, Jim Thompson, tracypress.com said Strunk stayed in a men's shelter and cheap motels months before his suicide.

STRUNK/ A6

# Ermita: Tacurong blast HSA test; PNP: No, it's extortion

By Michael Lim Ubac and Alcuin Papa

THE LATEST BOMB ATTACK IN Tacurong City, which injured three persons, including a child, can be a test case for the controversial Human Security Act (HSA), Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

"[The law] can be used everywhere, anywhere," Ermita said at a top-level press conference in Malacañang, adding that the bomb attack "shows us the relevance of the [HSA] and the need for us to be vigilant to protect the security of the people."

But Chief Supt. Felizardo Serapio Jr., Central Mindanao police chief, told reporters in Camp Crame that yesterday's attack on a unit of the Yellow Bus Lines (YBL) was an act of extortion, and not of terror.

Serapio said the group responsible for yesterday's explosion was also behind the series of bomb attacks on the Weena Bus Co.

"As in other cases in the past, the motive here is extortion. Lately, there have been developments in these incidents. The suspects are hitting terminals rather than buses this time," Serapio said.

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon also said the PNP was not yet inclined to test the antiterror law on those behind the attacks on the bus companies.

"It's dangerous to test the new law [at this time]. We can manage with the exist-

ERMITA/ A6

JOAN BONDOC

**THE BOLD, THE BALD, THE MARINES:** At the resumption Wednesday of the court-martial hearing at Camp Capinpin, Tanay, Rizal, Marines accused of a coup attempt on February 2006 had shaved their heads to salute their beheaded comrades. In a statement, they said that they offered solutions but were jailed instead. From left, Marine brigade commander Col. Ariel Querubin, Col. Orlando de Leon, Col. Januario Caringal and Col. Amando Banez. *(Story on Page A9.)*

# Atienza new DENR head

## Pride of place proposed for Chief Justice during Sona

By Nikko Dizon and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE JUDICIARY for spearheading an unprecedented summit on extrajudicial killings, administration Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago yesterday called for Chief Justice Reynato Puno to be seated alongside President Macapagal-Arroyo when she delivers her State of the Nation Address on Monday.

Santiago said the judiciary was the "most important branch of government" and yet the justices of the high court "are not given prominence at the Sona."

She suggested a "change in protocol" in the inaugural ceremonies of the 14th Congress to allow Puno to sit in the podium alongside Ms Arroyo, the Senate President and the Speaker of the House.

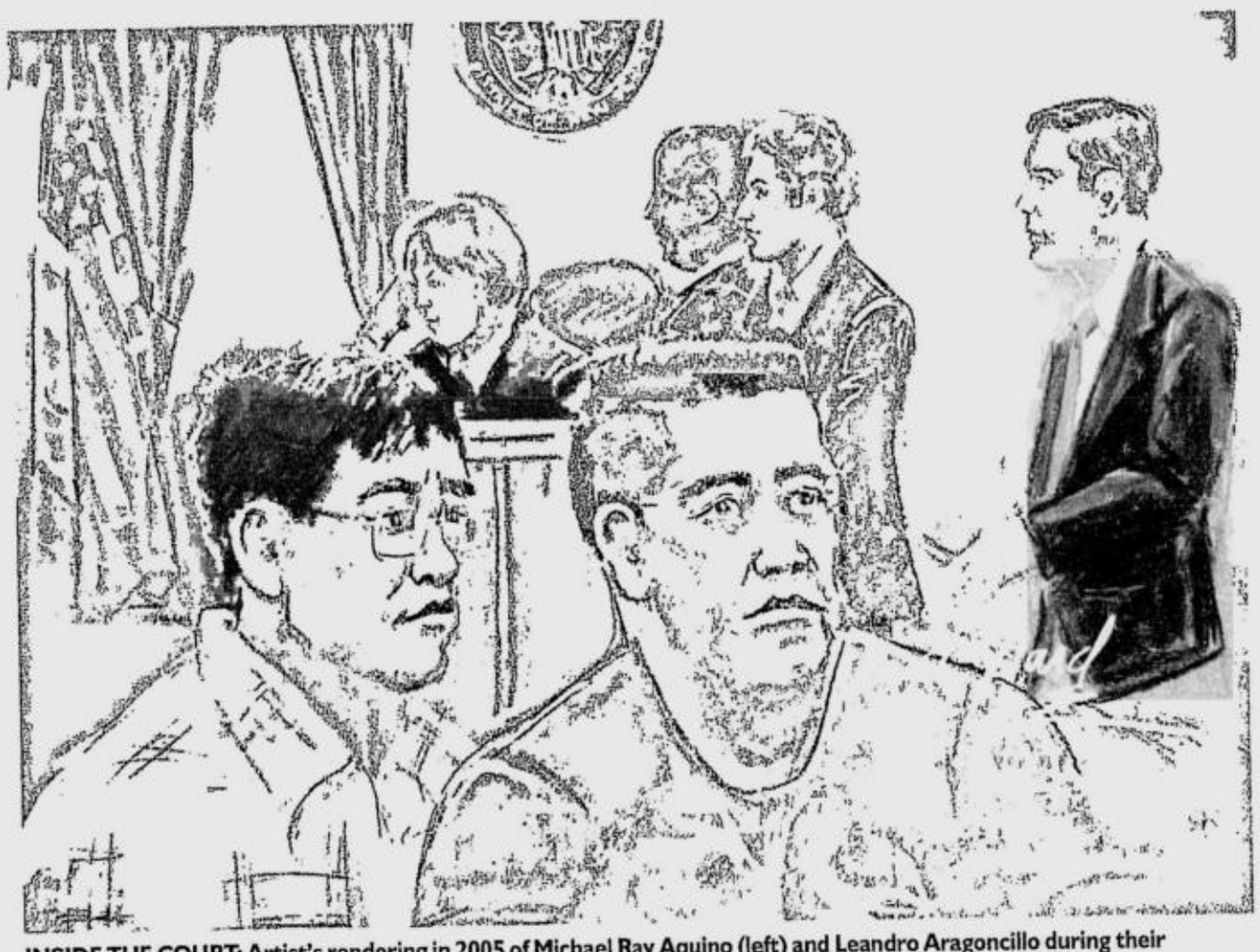
"We must recognize the judiciary now has a more active mandate from the Constitution because it has the power to reverse the two other branches whenever there is grave abuse of discretion," Santiago said.

She spoke to reporters before she swore in her son, Narciso "Archie" Santiago III, as party-list representative at the Commission on Elections (Comelec) offices in Manila. *(Story below.)*

The feisty senator took note that the justices were "sometimes placed in the back seats" during Congress' openings.

Santiago wrote Senate President Manny

PRIDE/ A7



**INSIDE THE COURT:** Artist's rendering in 2005 of Michael Ray Aquino (left) and Leandro Aragoncillo during their arraignment at US District Court in Newark, New Jersey. AP

## *Aquino gets 6 years in country he says he loves*

NEWARK, NEW JERSEY—FORMER Philippine National Police officer Michael Ray Aquino was sentenced to six years and four months in prison for his role in a plot in which he obtained secret US documents in an effort to undermine the Philippine government.

Aquino apologized as he addressed the court.

"I am sorry for what I did," the former intelligence officer said. "I never had the intention to harm the United States. I love this country."

Federal prosecutors sought the maximum 10-year term for Aquino. They maintained that the "serious disruption" he caused to the American government outweighed any benefit he should receive for pleading guilty in the conspiracy.

Prosecutors also said Aquino posed a "danger to the national security, including the foreign relations of the United States" by attempting to destabilize and overthrow Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

AQUINO/ A6

## Reyes on 4th Cabinet post as energy czar

By Michael Lim Ubac and Tina G. Santos

A LOYAL PRESIDENTIAL ALly once accused of felling a forest in the heart of Manila was appointed yesterday as environment secretary.

President Macapagal-Arroyo appointed one of her fierce defenders, former Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, to replace Angelo Reyes.

Reyes will move to the energy department as part of a Cabinet "rigodon" which now appears to be in full swing despite earlier denials from Malacañang.

Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the latest movements were prompted by the resignation of Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla, who said he wanted to involve himself in more "intellectual" pursuits.

News of Atienza's elevation as head of

ATIENZA/ A8

## Lotilla: I'd like to end my vow of poverty

By Abigail L. Ho

AFTER 22 YEARS AS A PUBLIC SERVANT, Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla is bidding goodbye to government service, wanting to pursue more "intellectual" endeavors.

In one of his most candid interviews

LOTILLA/ A8

# Miriam swears in son; party disgusted

REM ZAMORA

**SUDDENLY** at the Comelec, Sen. Miriam Santiago swears in son Archie Santiago as party-list representative, catching his own party Alliance for Rural Concerns by surprise.

By Nikko Dizon and Christian V. Esguerra

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO yesterday swore in her son, Narciso "Archie" Santiago III, as the party-list representative of the Alliance for Rural Concerns (ARC) at the Commission on Elections office after the poll body junked the group's petition to withdraw the younger Santiago's nomination.

At the Comelec's session hall, Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr., Commissioner Romeo Brawner and leaders of the peasant group, Rizal Farmers Federation, stood as witnesses to the mother-and-son event.

The Comelec en banc junked the ARC petition to withdraw Archie Santiago's nomination, citing the poll body's rules that the withdrawal or acceptance of

MIRIAM/ A7

# 'Trees for Life' to plant 20M seedlings by Dec.

By Carmela Reyes, *Inquirer Central Luzon* and TJ Burgonio

IN JUST AN HOUR, AT LEAST 10,000 trees were planted yesterday in denuded areas in a watershed in Norzagaray, Bulacan, during simultaneous tree-planting activities in key areas in the country.

About 1,000 government employees, students, teachers, Army officers and Dumagat tribe members planted wild and forest trees in denuded areas of Ipo Dam, part of the 62,309-hectare Angat watershed that supplies water to Metro Manila via the La Mesa Dam reservoir.

The activity, dubbed "Puno Para Sa Kinabukasan," was under the greening program of the national government that sought to plant 1.5 million trees simultaneously nationwide from 10 a.m. to 11 a.m. in a bid to make it to the Guinness Book of World Records.

At the La Mesa watershed, President Arroyo proclaimed it as a watershed reservation, and the Mt. Inayawan in Lanao del Norte as a protected and national park.

"We have to build a safe environment as a reflection of our commitment to man and nature," the President said, pointing out that public parks and nature parks were crucial to mitigating global warming.

TREES/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
THURSDAY, JULY 19, 2007

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SUERTRES: Mid-Day 2 0 1 | Evening 7 7 7
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# Second FrontPage

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**WEATHER FORECAST**

FORECAST: Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms mostly in the afternoon or evening.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Metro Manila | Partly Cloudy | Iloilo/Bacolod | Partly Cloudy |
| Baguio | Partly Cloudy | Roxas | Partly Cloudy |
| Tuguegarao | Partly Cloudy | Cebu | Partly Cloudy |
| Laoag | Partly Cloudy | Tacloban | Partly Cloudy |
| Clark Zone | Partly Cloudy | Gen. Santos | Cloudy with Rains |
| Tagaytay | Partly Cloudy | Zamboanga | Cloudy with Rains |
| Legazpi | Partly Cloudy | Cagayan de Oro | Cloudy with Rains |
| Calapan | Partly Cloudy | Davao | Cloudy with Rains |

COMPILED BY: SCHATZI QUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/07/18/07    SOURCE PAGASA

# Charges readied vs Moro rebs

## Court-martial of 28 officers loses judge

**By Christine Avendaño**

THE COURT-MARTIAL OF 28 Marine and Scout Rangers officers implicated in the February 2006 failed coup could not proceed yesterday for lack of a presiding judge, after the defense rejected a succession of judges recommended by the court.

Southern Luzon command chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano, who has been presiding over the military court for the past seven months and seven hearings, was yanked out at yesterday's hearing after accused former Marine commandant Maj. Gen. Renato Miranda issued a "peremptory challenge" to Yano's remaining on the panel.

LT. GEN. ALEXANDER YANO: "Challenged." JOAN BONDOC

This refers to a stage in the military court proceeding during which the accused is given a one-time chance to challenge the membership of the seven-man military court panel "without giving a reason."

The court then replaced Yano with Maj. Gen. Raul Caballes but this was challenged by defense lawyers who cited Section 4 of the Manual for Court Martial which states that an accused soldier cannot be tried by an officer who is lower in rank or in seniority to him or her.

Miranda, the highest-ranking of the accused officers, is a major general and hence should be tried by someone higher in rank or seniority.

With this, the court replaced Caballes with Maj. Gen. Cirano Austria, who said he was equal in rank with Miranda although junior to him in the seniority lineal list.

The court adjourned without resolving the issue and set the next hearing for July 27.

The 28 Marine and Scout Ranger officers are charged with mutiny and four other serious charges in connection with the attempt to overthrow the government in February 2006.

Seven Marine officers showed up at the hearing yesterday with their heads shaved.

The accused officers shaved all their hair as a gesture of solidarity with the 14 Marines who were killed in an ambush in Basilan last week.

The seven were former Marine 1st Brigade Commander Col. Ariel Miranda, Col. Juario Caringal, Col. Armando Banez, Col. Orlando de Leon, Lt. Col. Achilles Segumalian, Lt. Col. Custodio Parcon and Maj. Francisco Fernandez.

"I salute them, those who have died. The Marines lived up to the expectation of the Filipinos," Miranda told reporters during a break in the hearing.

Querubin said his bald look "speaks for itself." His wife Mariflor told reporters that the men who perished in the Basilan ambush were "the same men who cried when [her husband]" stepped down from his command in the aftermath of the failed coup attempt.

Parcon said shaving the head in "biblical times" meant one was mourning.

In a letter titled "Sympathy and Sorrow," Miranda said he and his co-accused grieved with the loved ones left behind by the soldiers, 10 of whom were beheaded.

"We're full of sorrow because we cannot do anything to help. We would like to help but because of our predicament we cannot do so," said the letter, a copy which was released to reporters.

## Police say suspects in beheadings known

**By Alcuin Papa**

CHARGES OF MULTIPLE MURder are set to be filed in court next week against members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) and the Abu Sayyaf Group for the beheading of 10 Marines who were ambushed by the Moro rebels in Basilan last week.

Autonomous Region for Muslim Mindanao (ARMM) police commander Chief Supt. Joel Goltiao told reporters they have already identified the suspects in the killing of 14 Marines, 10 of whom were mutilated and decapitated by the rebels.

"We have suspects. They are members of the 114th Base Command of the MILF and some members of the Abu Sayyaf Group," Goltiao revealed.

He said commanders of the MILF's 114th Base Command would be cited in the charges to be filed at a Basilan court. Other "John Does," mostly members of the MILF unit would also be included.

Goltiao declined to reveal the names of those who would be charged.

### Legitimate encounter

But MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said plans to charge MILF rebels in connection with a "legitimate encounter" would be against the spirit of the talks.

"That is contrary to the peace process," he said, without saying what action his group would take in response.

Goltiao said the charges would be based on the testimonies of members of the First Marine Brigade, the Philippine National Police, some witnesses and assets. "They know what happened," he said.

According to Goltiao, the incident was a "vendetta versus the Marines" for the earlier killing of two MILF members, including an imam, allegedly by soldiers.

Goltiao said the Marines have already filed charges against the MILF before the Coordinating Committee on Cessation of Hostilities for violation of the ceasefire agreement.

Goltiao said they would still push through with the case despite the possible resumption of peace talks with the MILF.

"We will continue the case. They (suspects) violated the law so we have to file the case," Goltiao stressed.

The Marines belonging to the First Marine Brigade were returning to camp after a futile search for kidnapped Italian priest Giancarlo Bossi when they came under fire from some 400 MILF and ASG rebels in Basilan last July 11, killing 14 of the Marines.

### Truce violation

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. has ordered the deployment of another Marine battalion to help forces already in Basilan identify the perpetrators and pinpoint their exact location, military spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro said yesterday.

The MILF had said that the Marines encroached into their stronghold and disarmed a guerrilla in violation of the truce. But the MILF denied involvement in the beheadings.

Bacarro told reporters that government troops would start "punitive actions" against the guerrillas involved in the latest attack if the MILF doesn't surrender them within a week.

"If they (MILF) fails to present them, the military will start its punitive actions," Bacarro said.

The MILF has rejected the demand and has placed its forces on alert in Basilan.

President Macapagal-Arroyo and military leaders instructed troops to make the peace process a priority. But she has also given them the green light to hunt down the attackers.

"We are one with the President in that we are not abandoning the peace talks, but we should not turn a blind eye to what happened," Marines spokesperson Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan said, adding that those who beheaded the 10 Marines should be brought to justice. *With reports from Christine O. Avendaño, Kristine L. Alave and AP*

## Machine-readable passports issued

**By Tarra Quismundo**

THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS (DFA) yesterday started accepting applications for machine-readable passports from senior citizens, migrant workers and their dependents while gearing for full compliance to the International Civil Aviation Organization (Icao) requirement.

Catching up with neighbors in Southeast Asia, the foreign office yesterday opened a lane for new passport applications for senior citizens at the main office in Pasay City, and seven lanes for overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) and their dependents at the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration in Mandaluyong.

The first batch of machine-readable passports, maroon booklets to be issued while the country prepares for chip-equipped electronic passports, is expected to be issued on Friday, said an official who refused to be named for lack of authority of speak on the matter.

The foreign office, which started issuing the machine-readable passport to government executives on June 18, allotted more than 5,000 booklets for the initial issuance to selected sectors. The DFA initially had problems with the private contractor hired for the project but later enlisted the help of Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) for the issuance of passports with better security features.

The official said the DFA will hold talks with BSP, which supplies the booklets, to determine when the foreign office could open lanes for the rest of the public who would like to upgrade their green passports to machine-readables or apply for new ones.

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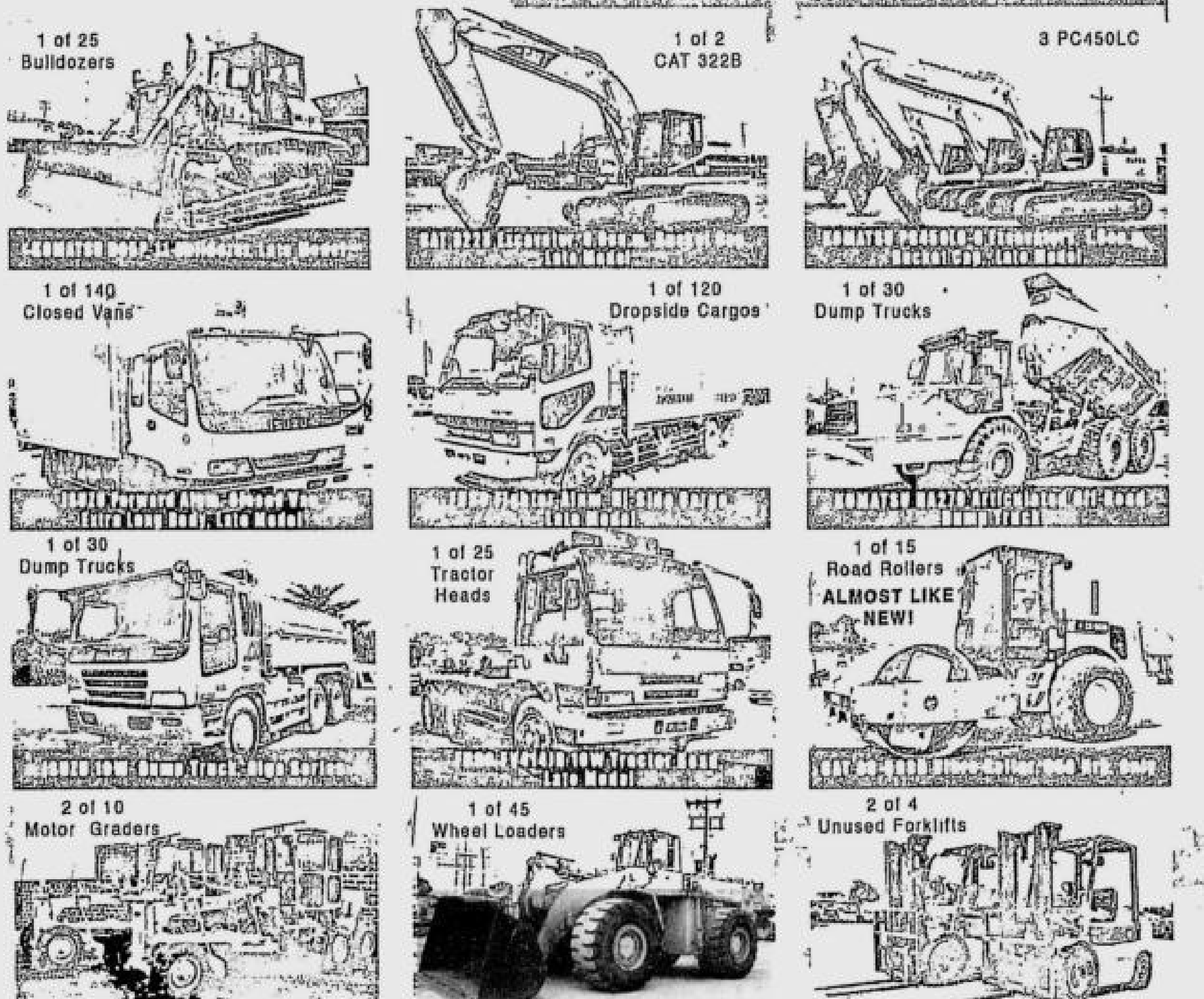


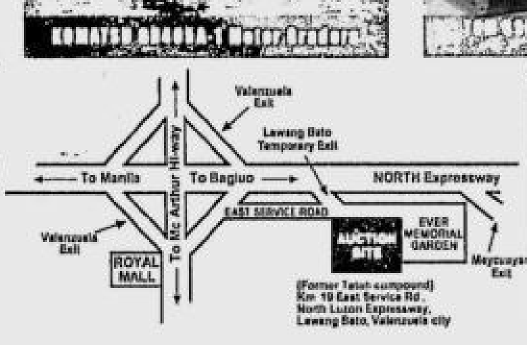


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# Garcia claims opposition vote

By Christian V. Esguerra

GARCIA

CLAIMING A "COOPERATIVE arrangement" with the opposition, supporters of Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia yesterday all but announced that the minority bloc would deliver the crucial swing vote to upset the bid of Pangasinan Rep. Jose de Venecia for a fifth term as speaker of the House of Representatives.

"We requested the opposition (lawmakers) to vote in favor of Garcia and they are amenable to it," claimed Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte, president of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi) whose faction is supporting Garcia.

A member of the opposition bloc's steering committee, Bayan Muna Rep. Satur Ocampo, however, would not confirm the news, saying they would meet tomorrow to decide on proposals made by Garcia during their meeting at the Dusit Hotel in Makati yesterday morning.

De Venecia, who claims he already has 183 votes—more than the required 123 to clinch his fifth term as speaker of the House—also met with the opposition bloc yesterday.

De Venecia's ruling Lakas-CMD and Kampi, the party of President Macapagal-Arroyo, are core members of the administration coalition in the House. Garcia's own party is split, with Kampi chair, Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, supporting De Venecia.

## Secret balloting

Garcia's camp casts doubt on De Venecia's numbers. They claim Garcia can still grab the speakership with the support of the 32 opposition congressmen, party-list representatives and those from the Drilon and Atienza wings of the Liberal party. They are also pushing for the selection of the speaker via secret balloting.

"It's very clear from way back that we will have a cooperative arrangement (with the opposition) insofar as the speakership is concerned," Villafuerte said.

Pressed if his statement meant that the minority would support Garcia's bid, Villafuerte replied: "That is the implication of our cooperative arrangement."

"Let them announce their own decision," he told the INQUIRER. "We don't want to preempt the formalities of their decision."

But opposition Representatives Ocampo and Darlene Antonino-Custodio of South Cotabato yesterday clarified that the minority did not commit to support either Garcia or De Venecia.

Both lawmakers, along with Ronaldo Zamora, the chosen minority leader, were present during the meeting, which was also attended by key Garcia supporters, Representatives Danny Suarez of Quezon and Jose Solis of Sorsogon.

"We made no commitment to either side," Ocampo told the INQUIRER. "We just listened."

## Minority prerogative

"We just wanted to see what the positions of De Venecia and Garcia were," Custodio said.

In the Garcia meeting, Villafuerte said his group assured opposition congressmen that they would "retain their prerogative to select their own minority leader."

"We will not intervene in the matter," he said, noting that the arrangement required the amendment of a House rule which states that the candidate for speaker with the second highest number of votes automatically becomes the minority leader.

Villafuerte said his camp agreed to push for separate voting for the majority and minority leaders.

"Garcia has the winning numbers, but we would rather keep that to ourselves and deliver a surprise to De Venecia," he said.

De Venecia's camp, on the other hand, did not issue a statement on yesterday's meetings.

NOW A 2-HORSE RACE

# QC solon backs out for JDV

QUEZON CITY REP. ANNIE ROSA SUSANO yesterday withdrew her bid for the House speakership, endorsing Speaker Jose de Venecia's run for a record fifth term.

Susano's withdrawal virtually on the eve of the opening of the 14th Congress on Monday, followed that of Mindanao Rep. Edelmiro Amante, another leader of the majority coalition whose members are supporting De Venecia, statement from the De Venecia camp said.

It said that as of yesterday, 184 majority coalition members have signed a manifesto endorsing De Venecia.

Only 122 members are needed to win the speakership in the 244-member chamber.

De Venecia, president of the ruling Lakas-CMD, is being challenged by Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia, a member of the Kabalikat ng Malayang Pilipino (Kampi), which is part of the majority coalition.

Meanwhile, a Lakas leader said there would be no changes in the rules of the House on Monday, amid calls for an amendment to the chamber's rules to make sure that neither of the contenders for the speakership would become minority leader.

## Not a chance

"It has always been the practice to adopt the Rules of the previous Congress provisionally. It is never the practice that after adopting the Rules of the previous Congress the chamber would put it through amendments on the same day," said Iloilo Rep. Arthur Defensor.

De Venecia and Garcia, who are both allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo, could become minority leader as the House rules state that the second placer in the speakership race becomes minority leader.

The opposition, with just 32 members, has conceded that none of its leaders stand a chance of placing second in the contest.

DE VENECIA

According to Defensor, an amendment to the House rules may not even be necessary as De Venecia and Garcia have said they would not accept the minority leadership as it is a position for a member of the opposition.

Defensor is slated to become majority leader if De Venecia wins a fifth term as House leader.

At an orientation seminar yesterday, De Venecia regaled neophyte members with promises of P1 million travel allowance, additional funds for staff support and a new building in the Batasan Pambansa complex.

He said all representatives, whether from the majority or minority, would get P1 million in travel funds to entice them to travel.

He said lawmakers should travel abroad to learn the socio-economic and political systems of other countries. He said their constituents would benefit as a result of these travels.

## See the world

"Go to Korea, China, Japan, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, New Zealand, and then go to Europe and the US because you can build so many infrastructure projects in your province, in your city, in your town under the build-operate-transfer law. You don't have to depend on the national budget," De Venecia told the first-termers.

BOT partners for infrastructure projects may result from contacts made during such trips.

De Venecia also told the freshmen representatives that the President has granted his request for an allocation for additional staff for each congressman and for the maintenance of legislators' offices in their districts.

He said Malacañang has also approved the construction of a new building in the House using the savings of the chamber last year amounting to P70 million.

Manila Rep. Amado Bagatsing, an ally of Garcia, said De Venecia's promise of P1 million in travel allowances showed he was desperate to get the House members' votes.

Bagatsing said De Venecia stole the idea of increased staff funding for each lawmaker from Garcia.

Susano also turned down the proposal for a secret ballot in the speakership election, joining a majority coalition clamor to quash the proposal.

"We want full transparency in the election of our Speaker. We want our constituencies to know who we are voting for," Susano said. *Norman Bordadora*

# *Come home for talks, Joma urged*

By Norman Bordadora and TJ Burgonio

A SENIOR MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF Representatives yesterday called on exiled Communist leader Jose Maria Sison to come home and himself lead the peace negotiations with the Philippine government.

Cebu City Rep. Antonio Cuenco, the chair of the House committee on foreign affairs in the 13th Congress, said Sison's homecoming was the ultimate show of sincerity on the part of the rebels.

Sison is founding chair of the Communist Party of the Philippines, which, together with its 7,000-strong New People's Army, has been waging insurgent war in the country over the past 38 years.

## Counter-productive

Armed Forces chief Hermogenes Esperon proposed the resumption of peace talks with communist rebels before a national summit on Monday called to tackle the spate of extrajudicial killings in the country. Sison, in exile in The Netherlands, responded by saying they were open to "exploratory talks" but rejected Esperon's call for a three-year ceasefire as a precondition for the talks.

"Talks via remote control are counter-productive, and so is the process whereby government negotiators need to go to The Netherlands just to come face to face with Joma (Sison)," Cuenco said.

"That's a waste of precious time as well as government resources," he said, adding that the government could issue safe conduct passes to Sison and other CPP leaders who may wish to join the talks.

## Not yet off the hook

The CPP-NPA withdrew from negotiations with the government in 2004 after it was included in the US and European governments' list of foreign terrorist organizations.

Yesterday, Sison conducted a video conference with his lawyer and supporters at the Bayan headquarters in Quezon City.

In his prepared statement, Sison thanked Bayan and lawyer Romeo Capulong for supporting him, and credited them for his victories, including the recent ruling of the European Court of First Instance which delisted him from the terrorist blacklist.

Capulong said the ECFI's July 11 judgment covered all the prior decisions of the Council of the European Union, including its June 28, 2007 decision relisting Sison as a terrorist.

But the Dutch Embassy in Manila had been quick to clarify that he wasn't off the hook yet because the ECFI judgment only covered the Council's 2006 decision, not the 2007 decision.

For now, however, Capulong said their camp saw no reason to question the judgment, but would merely wait for the Council to appeal it with the European Court of Justice.

If ever the ECFI clarifies its judgment, and rules that this did not cover the Council's June 28, 2007 relisting of Sison, he said they would file a petition to get Sison off the list, and said that they expected a favorable ruling.

Sison said his inclusion in the list deprived him of judicial protection.

"The basis used in the filing of the rebellion charges against the Batasan 6 and Sison, which was dismissed by the Supreme Court, was the same ground used in the Council's decision to place Sison on the EU terror list," Capulong said.

# 'Give peace a chance'

LUCENA CITY—Priests in Quezon province have appealed to the government and New People's Army rebels to resume the stalled peace talks.

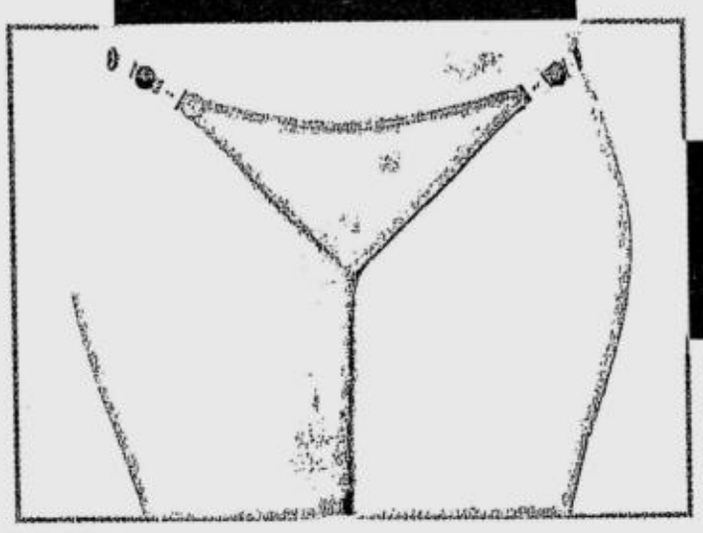
"Give peace a chance to reign in our country. Both parties must learn to look after the good of our land. They have to come to a mutual agreement for the benefit of our people," said Catholic charismatic priest Fr. Joey Faller in a mobile phone interview.

"Peace, according to the late Pope John Paul II, is not the absence of war but a condition of love," he said.

Faller, who is based in Lucban town, said the peace negotiators from the government and the communist-led National Democratic Front should follow the guidelines and parameters set by both parties.

Amid efforts to revive the stalled peace negotiations, communities in northern Quezon are preparing to declare their area as a peace sanctuary. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*

TOP or BOTTOM HEAVY?



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## URGENT APPEAL TO THE PRESIDENT

# Save the horseracing industry

For the sake of horseracing and the various segments who have painstakingly nurtured its growth through years of hard work and substantial investments in financial resources aggregating P12 Billion pesos, employ thousands of workers and generate P1.2 Billion pesos in annual government revenues, we respectfully request for a complete change of leadership and revamp of the Board of Commissioners of Philracom.

**HER EXCELLENCY**
**GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO**

*President*
*Republic of the Philippines*
*Malacañang Palace*
*Manila, Philippines*

HER EXCELLENCY:

It is with the deepest respect that we, members of the local horseracing industry, reiterate our urgent appeal to you for a complete revamp of the Philippine Racing Commission (Philracom) in view of the deplorable state of affairs since the appointment of retired Gen. Florencio Fianza as Chairman of said government agency.

In our original letter to Her Excellency dated March 5, 2007, we brought to your attention Gen. Fianza's belligerent attitude against the horse owners, his lack of knowledge on the rudiments and intricacies of racing which has led to the issuance of controversial resolutions and his total failure to muster the support of the various segments of the industry, thereby causing confusion on the direction and growth of local horseracing. In addition, Gen. Fianza used "vulgar" language in addressing an industry forum, a misconduct not befitting a gentleman and public servant. That meeting ended with a very deep animosity and a continuing distrust of the horse owners on the incumbent Chairman.

Since then, local horseracing has been in the doldrums and continues to operate in a vacuum. No clear course of action has been charted as to the overall direction of the sport, to the chagrin and absolute dismay of all concerned. Added to these woes are a new set of erroneous policy directives which, at best, only damage rather than uplift the sport, to wit:

1. A Philracom "tentative" resolution dated June 14, 2007 on importation of racehorses was passed which seeks to resurrect antiquated policies which have been negated by previous commissions and updated by the same to conform to prevailing international standards of horseracing. The restrictions on age qualification, purse earnings abroad are likewise passé. The restriction on ownership status contravenes our nation's free trade policy and of doubtful constitutionality. Unfortunately, Gen. Fianza knows no better on these intricate rulings and simply heeds the prodding of "myopic thinkers" in the commission to issue counter-productive resolutions. All horse owners' associations are totally against these retrogressive pronouncements.

2. The revision of the two-year old stakes race calendar from the traditional schedule of July 2007 back to March 2007 threw all horse owners and trainers into a state of confusion because the majority population of two-year olds were still very raw and young and were not yet ready for competitive racing. Why this resolution was passed puzzled many and horse owners voiced out in unison that indeed, this is another clear indication that Gen. Fianza knew nothing about the basic anatomy of a horse much less the sport of horseracing.

Unfortunately, the prime movers against all these nuisance impositions received summons from Gen. Fianza to air their side of an alleged collusion to boycott the races, which he considered to be an act of economic sabotage. Simultaneously, veiled threats in the form of cardboard coffins were received by these critics in their offices and residences, obviously to intimidate and sow fear in them. This narcissistic police mentality has no place in this "Sport of Kings."

When Gen. Fianza assumed the position of Chairman, the betting public thought that he is the "white knight" who can smoothen the perennial problems of illegal bookie operations, the use of banned drugs on horses, the much-to-be desired officiating of our race stewards and dishonest jockeys – they too were disappointed as their new chairman and his colleagues in the commission did nothing substantial to solve these problems. All told, this litany of problems including previous preposterous rulings on handicapping and allocation of prize money contained in our original letter will continue to persist for as long as we have an inefficient commission under the current leadership. This is truly a classic case of pure managerial incompetence in running the commission.

Sad to say, Gen. Fianza is simply not the right man for the job.

Madame President, in line with your planned re-organization of the bureaucracy and your earnest desire to recruit the best and brightest to run industries such as horseracing, we urgently reiterate our request for a complete revamp of the Philracom to pave the way for a new commission composed of people who possess competence, integrity and dedication to the job at hand. We need people who truly understand the rudiments of the game and are well-equipped with the mental calisthenics to untangle the mess created by the Fianza commission and adroitly craft the correct regulatory policies.

Hopefully, this urgent appeal would be given due consideration by Her Excellency.

*Signed*:

Aristeo G. Puyat, Augusto Benedicto L. Santos, Jose L. Santos, Norberto Quisumbing Jr., Luis Asistio, Sr., Jose Mari Franco, Augusto de Jesus, Eric Tagle, Roman L. Santos, Andrew Sanchez, Albert Yam, Dante Arevalo, Victor Martinez, Ramon Balatbat, Ramon Jesus Mamon, Marlon Cunanan, Emmanuel Santos, Rodolfo G. Mendoza, Enrique Javier, Joseph Dyhengco, Leandro Naval, Francisco Cayco, Valentin Cayco, Papiroman Farms, Mar Tirona, Elias Chua, Juanito Tionloc, Tek Chua, Robert Ramirez, Hubert Leong, Mario Morales, Federico Diño Jr., Panfilo Castro Jr., Rene Villoria, Eugene Tan, Ma. Teresa Trinidad, Robert Francisco, Victor Ferrer Jr., Pierre Niles, Carlos Robes, Alfredo Cruz, Ruben Laureano, David So, Sir J Express, Valentin Guerra, Maximo Guce, Emilio Basco, Rogelio Catajan, William Fernandez.

# Lawyers going bananas over 'apples and potatoes'

By DJ Yap

LUMPING TOGETHER THE SITUATIONS OF Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV and former Zamboanga del Norte Rep. Romeo Jalosjos is "not like comparing apples and oranges," state prosecutors said yesterday.

And it is certainly not "like comparing apples to potatoes," as the new senator, apparently confused about his idioms, stated last week.

"They are the same bananas," declared the prosecution panel led by Assistant Chief State Prosecutor Richard Anthony Fadullon and State Prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera.

The prosecutors said the case of Jalosjos, who was reelected to the House of Representatives while on trial for rape, had special application to the Trillanes case "because that case effectively shot down any appeal to special status as an elective public official facing a non-bailable offense."

The exchange of fruity metaphors was occasioned by a petition for wide-ranging privileges filed by Trillanes, who is charged with leading the failed July 2003 coup, also known as the Oakwood mutiny.

State prosecutors yesterday asked Makati Judge Oscar Pimentel to deny Trillanes' omnibus motion requesting, among other things, a workstation inside his cell and an all-encompassing leave to attend official Senate functions.

## Same banana

Trillanes also asked Pimentel, who presides at Branch 148 of the Makati Regional Trial Court, to be allowed to grant media interviews during specified days of the week.

Fadullon, Navera and prosecuting attorney Amanda Felipe chided Trillanes for claiming that lumping his case with that of Jalosjos was 'like comparing apples to potatoes.'"

"Juxtaposing the Jalosjos case and accused Trillanes' is not comparing 'apples with oranges,' as the idiom goes, for in fact they are the 'same bananas,'" (sic) they said.

After his conviction in 1997 for raping an 11-year-old girl, Jalosjos sought permission from the Supreme Court to be allowed to perform his functions as an elected representative but was denied.

"When the voters of his district elected the accused-appellant to Congress, they did so with full awareness of the limitation on his freedom of action," the high court said.

"They did so with the knowledge that he could achieve only legislative results which he could accomplish within the confines of the prison," the Supreme Court said.

Last month, Malacañang announced the commutation of Jalosjos' two life terms to 16 years, three months and three days based on a recommendation of the Board of Pardons and Parole, drawing objections from various sectors.

Trillanes earlier said his case could not be compared to that of Jalosjos, claiming that when Jalosjos sought permission to be allowed to discharge his duties as a congressman, he had already been convicted.

But the prosecutors said the argument was false as Jalosjos' conviction was not yet final and was on appeal with the high tribunal.

They noted further that Trillanes had been denied bail and has not been released on recognizance, and so must be detained in jail while his case is pending.

The prosecutors also cited a recent Supreme Court ruling stating that "all prisoners whether under preventive detention or serving final sentence cannot practice their profession nor engage in any business or occupation, or hold office, elective or appointive, while in detention."

"This is a necessary consequence of arrest and detention," the high tribunal ruling said.

The prosecutors also dismissed Trillanes' argument citing the cases of former president Joseph Estrada and Moro National Liberation Front leader Nur Misuari in his plea for a special arrangement.

# Gringo: Mine's another fruit

SEN. GREGORIO HONASAN SAID HIS EXONeration from coup d'etat charges in connection with the failed July 2003 coup, or the Oakwood mutiny, cannot apply to the group of junior officers who staged the mutiny.

"With due respect to their lawyer, my case is different," he said.

On July 13, Makati Judge Oscar Pimentel dismissed the coup d'etat charge against Honasan based on the recommendation of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Honasan, who was earlier allowed to post bail, was cleared by Gonzalez of the charge that he masterminded the mutiny in an attempt to overthrow the Arroyo government and install himself as junta leader.

Speculation rose that Honasan had made a deal with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

But while he has dropped his anti-Arroyo stance and has strained his relations with deposed President Joseph Estrada, Honasan insists he did not make any deal.

Thirteen of the 31 accused junior officers, who style themselves as the Magdalo group, on Tuesday asked the Makati court to similarly dismiss the coup d'etat case against them, citing the exoneration of their alleged mastermind, Honasan.

They said the charges filed against them and Honasan were "based on the same facts, issues and circumstances."

"The absolution of Senator Honasan in the criminal case exposes not only the weakness and inconsistencies in the prosecution's case. Much more, it strengthened the accused's innocence," said the 13 Army officers led by two of the alleged core leaders, Captains Gerardo Gambala and Milo Maestrecampo.

The 18 other officers similarly charged, including former Navy lieutenant and now Sen. Antonio Trillanes IV did not join in their petition.

In an interview, Honasan said his situation could not be applied to the case of the junior officers. He said there were differences in some "technical" aspects that can be explained by lawyers.

He recommended his lawyer, Daniel Gutierrez, to the Magdalo officers. *Dona Pazzibugan*

## Corrections

IN THE JULY 18 ISSUE, a caption of a photo accompanying the front-page story—"Imelda visits PGH, 'scene of crime'"—inadvertently omitted the name of the director of the Philippine General Hospital, who was in the photo with former First Lady Imelda Marcos. The PGH director is Dr. Carmelo Alfiler.

* * *

IN LATER EDITIONS OF THE same issue, a front-page story carried an erroneous headline—"28 more cases vs antiterror law filed at SC." There were no 28 new cases challenging the Human Security Act. The law was challenged in a joint petition filed by 28 individuals and groups on Tuesday.

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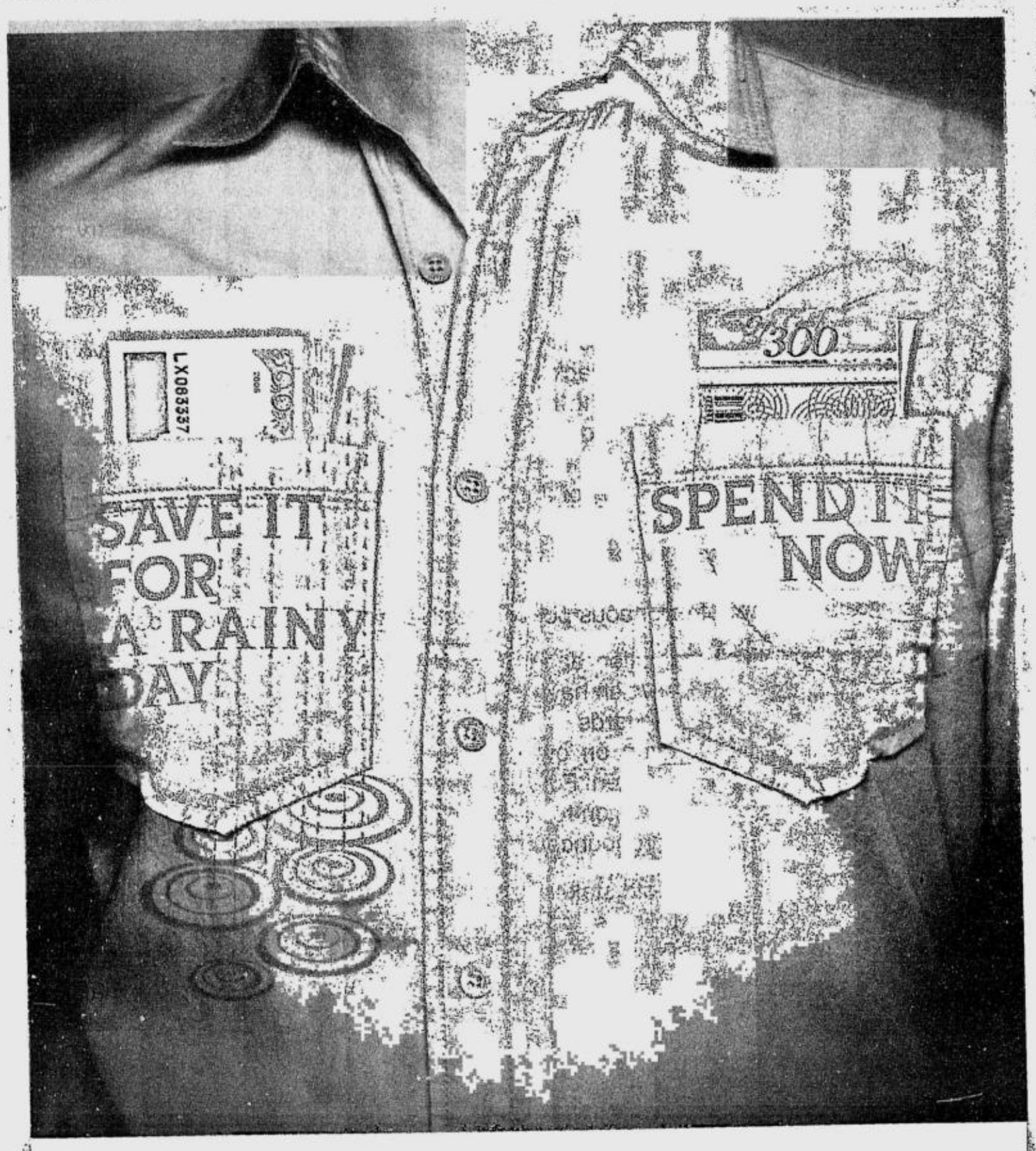


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# Ermita: Tacurong blast HSA test case

From page A1

ing laws," Calderon said.

Earlier in the day, police and military authorities in Tacurong announced that an improvised bomb exploded at around 12:30 p.m. in a YBL bus at the public transport terminal.

Col. Danilo Garcia, commander of the Army's 604th Infantry Brigade, said the bomb went off shortly after the bus with Plate No. LGC 304 arrived in Tacurong from Isulan, also in Sultan Kudarat. It was bound for General Santos City.

Garcia said the al-Khobar gang, which had been demanding protection money from the YBL, could be behind the explosion.

## Terror list

Ermita disclosed that the Palace, through the departments and agencies involved in security and peace and order, was now drawing up a list of terror groups in the country.

There was no specific mention of the Communist Party of the Philippines and its armed wing, the New People's Army, but Palace officials said the government would not work for the removal of the CPP-NPA from the list of terror organizations drawn up by the United States and European Union.

"Having them delisted, we're not agreeing to that. That's the very reason we have had stalled peace talks [since 2004]," Ermita said.

He said the "list of possible targets" of the HSA would be made public "in due time."

The officials present at the press conference were Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera, Defense Undersecretary Ric Blancaflor, Foreign Undersecretary Rafael Seguis, Director Cesar Garcia of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency and Director General Conrado Limcaoco Jr. of the Philippine Information Agency.

Seguis said it was the Arroyo administration, through the late Foreign Secretary Blas Ople, that "convinced the European Union to include" the CPP-NPA in the foreign terror list.

Asked about the communist rebels' demand to be delisted as a precondition for the resumption of peace talks being mediated by the Norwegian government, Seguis said: "We cannot in our instance request the delisting. I don't think we can do that."

But he stressed that the terror listing contemplated in the HSA was "a different one" because it required a process via the Court of Appeals.

"It's an entirely new procedure for us," he said, referring to the law's requirement that certain organizations be proscribed as terrorist groups.

## Cold sweat in the media

Defending the HSA, Gonzalez said the public should first note its relevance before questioning its legality.

"We have not yet tested this law. It's just like telling me that this law has [triggered] cold sweat on the backs of people in the media," he said.

But Calderon said his men in the PNP had "apprehensions" about the antiterror law.

"There are a lot of penalties against the PNP. It will difficult, but we will find ways to cope," he said.

Chief Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, the PNP spokesperson, said that at a command conference yesterday in Camp Crame, heads of the PNP's regional and support units voiced the concerns of the troops on the ground.

Paramount among these concerns, Calderon said, was the penalty to be slapped on police officers found to have detained any suspect illegally. (Under the HSA, anyone who is detained illegally is entitled to P500,000 per day of his/her detention, to be paid by the arresting agency.)

Calderon said the PNP would propose that the multi-agency Anti-Terror Council shoulder the fee.

**BOMBED: Member of the Army Bomb Squad inspects the damage on a passenger bus bombed on Wednesday in Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat. Three people, including a 12-year-old boy, were wounded in the attack blamed by the military on suspected extortionists.**

JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

He also raised the need to disseminate the right information on the HSA to ground troops.

"[We must] go down to the regional, station, precinct and, if possible, the barangay level. We have to also inform the community, in order to make [the HSA] acceptable," Calderon said.

He said an information campaign was being planned, and that the PNP would continue conducting training seminars for its personnel.

But with "safeguards" in place, Calderon wondered why militant groups were protesting the HSA. "We haven't given it a chance yet," he said, adding:

"The new law leaves no room for abuse. I will be the first to impose sanctions and file charges against erring personnel."

## 2 arrested

The explosion in Tacurong occurred a day after police authorities announced the filing of charges against two men arrested in connection with a similar attack against the YBL in nearby Koronadal City on July 7.

"The bomb attack could be a demonstration of outrage by the group, whose two members was arrested last week and charged in court," Serapio said in Tacurong.

Insp. Maricel Alcala, spokesperson of the Tacurong police, identified two of those wounded in yesterday's explosion as vendor Kent Antiquiza, 12, a resident of the city, and Melecio Castillo of Mlang, Cotabato.

She said the third one, a woman, had minor injuries.

Alcala said Castillo and the woman were among the bus passengers. She said two other passengers fainted after the explosion and were taken to a hospital.

Earlier, Supt. Suharto Tocao, Sultan Kudarat police chief, said the explosion occurred when the bus had been emptied of passengers.

Bus driver Felizardo Ordan said that as soon as the bus arrived at the terminal and shortly before the explosion, three women passengers hurriedly disembarked.

"I believe they carried the explosive," he told Radio dxMS in Cotabato City.

## Powerful bomb

Garcia said the explosive could have been fashioned out of a 60-mm or 81-mm mortar shell and was fitted with a mobile phone as trigger mechanism.

He said that as in the previous explosions in the region, some of which were blamed on extortion syndicates, the bomb was also powerful and tore out the bus' rear portion.

Tocao said investigators were checking if yesterday's explosion had any connection to the July 7 explosion in another YBL unit in Koronadal.

No one was injured in that explosion, but the bus was damaged.

Last month, eight persons were killed and more than 24 others were injured when explosions hit Weena buses in Bansalan, Davao del Sur; Matalam, North Cotabato; and Cotabato City.

Unlike the July 7 attack in Koronadal, no one has been arrested in connection with the attacks on the Weena buses. *With reports from Edwin Fernandez, Aquiles Zonio, Charlie Señase and Jeoffrey Maitem, Inquirer Mindanao*

# 'Pamalakaya 13' experience in 2005 a 'preview' of antiterror law

**By Tonette Orejas**
*Inquirer Central Luzon*

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE EXperience of the "Pamalakaya 13" in 2005 gave a "preview" of the threat posed by the Human Security Act on legitimate protests, the militant fisherfolk group said.

Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap said that in 2005, 13 leaders of fishermen opposing the dumping of Metro Manila garbage in Obando, Bulacan, in 2005, were arrested and nearly charged with what are now classified as acts of terror under the HSA.

"If my memory serves me right, Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco and the garbage contractor, the Philippine Ecology Systems Inc., wanted to charge our leaders with hijacking, kidnapping and robbery for their concerted action to stop the barge from dumping Metro Manila's waste in Obando," Hicap said in a statement.

"All the violations mentioned are included in the HSA as acts of terrorism," he said.

Hicap said the protesters rode on 20 bancas to stop the barge from passing the Binuangan River in Obando on its way to a controlled disposal facility in Navotas.

He said that right after the incident, Reynaldo Wycoco, the then director of the National Bureau of Investigation, and lawyer Nestor Mantaring (now NBI chief) summoned the 13 Pamalakaya leaders to the bureau and answer allegations of hijacking, kidnapping and robbery.

The summons covered Pamalakaya-Bulacan chair Ricardo de Armas, his brother Sonny de Armas, Celso Balasta, Obet Calbadores, Adriano del Rosario, Racelito San Diego, Rey Silangan, Nading de la Cruz, Arthur Burgos, Isidro de la Cruz, Cecilio Alcantara, Virgilio del Rosario and Orland de Vera.

The Pamalakaya 13 did not heed the summons, saying their action was in defense of their livelihood as marginal fishermen, and of the people's health.

De Vera was killed by alleged soldiers in his house in August 2006.

"The government was planning to test the [HSA] ahead of its passage two years ago by reducing legitimate protests with legal, moral and lawful cause to acts of terror," Hicap said.

# Aquino gets 6 years in country he says he loves

From page A1

Defense lawyer Mark A. Berman argued that Aquino should face less than four years in prison, contending that the documents were "likely to cause little or no harm. ... Much of the information in the documents was publicly available in the Philippines."

Aquino, 41, pleaded guilty in July 2006 in a deal that spared him a life term if convicted of espionage. He admitted possessing secret documents containing information on the United States' confidential intelligence sources and methods, as well as information on terrorist threats to US military personnel in the Philippines.

Recipients included former President Joseph Estrada, who was ousted six years ago; Panfilo Lacson, an opposition senator; and former House Speaker Arnulfo Fuentebella, according to court documents.

Estrada and Lacson have acknowledged receiving information from Aquino or co-defendant Leandro Aragoncillo, but deny any wrongdoing.

## Deportation likely

Aquino was once a senior officer under Lacson in the PNP. He fled to the United States to escape murder charges in 2001 and lived with his wife and son in New York City. After serving his prison term, he is likely to be deported.

He has been in federal custody since he and Aragoncillo were arrested in September 2005. Aragoncillo is a former US Marine who worked as a military aide to vice presidents Al Gore and Dick Cheney before becoming an FBI intelligence analyst. He is to be sentenced Wednesday.

Aragoncillo, 48, pleaded guilty to four charges in May. The most serious charge, conspiracy to transmit national defense information, can carry the death penalty. But under a plea agreement, he faces 15 to 20 years in prison. He is a naturalized US citizen who was born in the Philippines.

Prosecutors said Aragoncillo, who began working in the vice president's office in 1999, was recruited in 2000 by opposition forces and began working with Aquino in early 2005.

He admitted passing information to Aquino and opposition politicians in his homeland who wanted to oust President Arroyo.

In court Tuesday, Berman said that Aragoncillo told FBI agents after his arrest that he had informed Cheney of his dealings with opposition forces in the Philippines.

Outside court, Assistant US Attorney Karl H. Buch said, "We have no evidence that he made that disclosure to Cheney." He declined to comment further.

Cheney spokesperson Jamie Hennigan declined to comment on whether the vice president had any such conversation.

## 'Unindicted coconspirators'

In Manila, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez yesterday said the government would initiate criminal charges against the "unindicted coconspirators" of Aquino and Aragoncillo.

"They (coconspirators) have damaged the republic by exposing matters which are confidential in character, which may have affected the Philippine defense situation or even the stability of the state itself," Gonzalez told reporters.

He did not identify the alleged plotters who could be charged with espionage and sedition.

Gonzalez said that once the trials were concluded, he would write the US justice department to get the complete records of the cases. He said US authorities had earlier promised to provide the Philippine government with the case records.

"All these documents are very manifest that there are people in this country who helped facilitate, who aided Aquino and Aragoncillo," he added. *Reports from AP, Jerome Aning, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. , Dona Pazzibugan and Allison W. Lopez*

# Strunk broke, desperate, lived in shelters, says friend

From page A1

He occasionally stayed at the Tracy Inn, where he reportedly jumped off a second-floor balcony on July 14. He was said to have checked into the inn on July 8.

The 68-year-old former actor and singer was married to Filipino screen icon Nida Blanca, who was found dead in her car in November 2001 at the parking lot of the Atlanta building in Greenhills, San Juan. The next year, Strunk was accused of killing Blanca over money.

Per Thompson's account to the news website, Strunk phoned from the Tracy Inn less than 24 hours before his body was found.

He said Strunk asked him to stop by the hotel and added that it was "important" that they meet.

Thompson replied that he was at a youth camp then, and could not see Strunk in the next few days.

"He just said goodbye and hung up," Thompson said, adding that there was nothing in their last conversation to indicate that Strunk was planning to take his own life.

## Failed marriage

According to tracypress.com, Thompson was one of a few people who had communicated with Strunk since January.

At that time, Strunk had moved to Redding, Oregon, to get married.

That marriage was annulled after several weeks, the website said, and Strunk returned to Tracy. He later quit a part-time position as a city employee.

It was apparently downhill from there.

"He lost everything. He went from having everything you'd possibly want to having literally nothing," Margaret Spann, a friend of Strunk's from the Good Shepherd Community Church, where he worshiped, told tracypress.com.

Thompson also said Strunk had talked "very little" about Blanca's murder.

But he did say he started avoiding a Catholic church in Stockton after a group of Filipinos flashed him angry looks a couple of months ago.

"He was scared," Thompson said. "He wouldn't go back to that church."

## Diabetes and drinking

Quoting Strunk's friends, tracypress.com said Strunk was taking large doses of medicine for diabetes and "drank fairly regularly."

Thompson said he let Strunk stay in a trailer on his property in Tracy for a week until the latter could afford to rent a room.

Strunk later stayed in cheap motels when he had money, and in a men's shelter in Stockton when he had none.

Thompson said he occasionally gave Strunk money as well as the latter's mail from a post office box in Stockton. He said he held on to Strunk's debit card to help his friend save for an apartment.

**STRUNK: From everything to nothing**

Strunk's memorial service is tentatively scheduled on July 29.

## 'Vital key' lost

In Manila, Blanca's daughter Kay Torres has broken her silence on her stepfather's death.

"It's very tragic that Rod's life had to end this way. After all, life is not ours or anyone's to take. Whatever his faults and shortcomings may have been, I have never wished this kind of misfortune or tragedy on him," she said in a statement issued on Tuesday.

Torres said that with Strunk's death, a "vital key" to the solution of her mother's death was lost.

"My mother's painful death still leaves us with deep open wounds and many unanswered questions, but Rod's death only makes it more impossible for those answers to be obtained, and his death only pushes us farther from the truth," she said.

Torres offered her condolences to Strunk's sister Sharry, who had earlier said she doubted the police statement that her brother's death was a suicide.

## Coconspirators

But despite his death, Strunk's coconspirators in her mother's death can still be made liable, Torres said.

She said the others involved in the case "should be made to answer for the crime they have committed."

"I feel that the case should not end with the death of Rod Strunk, especially since his innocence or guilt has never been proven. Rod may have avoided extradition here, but now he will have to face a much higher court," she said.

So far, only Philip Medel has been arrested for Blanca's murder.

Medel initially told investigators that Strunk had hired him to kill Blanca. But he later recanted his statements.

Strunk was allowed to leave for the United States in 2003, to attend to his ailing mother. (She died before he could get there.)

The Philippine government had tried to have Strunk extradited, to no avail.

# El Shaddai-backed party-list group given 3 House seats

By Nikko Dizon

ONLY BUHAY, AN EL SHADDAI-backed party-list group, got two additional seats in the House of Representatives with four other groups each getting one more seat after the Commission on Elections (Comelec) was able to canvass more than 16.2 million votes for the party-list groups.

With the biggest number of votes among the 13 qualified party-list groups, Buhay, or Buhay Hayaang Yumabong, became the "first party" in this year's midterm elections, the Comelec en banc said, sitting as the National Board of Canvassers.

This was in accordance with the Supreme Court decision on the Veterans Federation Party v. Comelec, and reiterated in the Citizens' Battle Against Corruption v. Comelec, the en banc said in Resolution 07-72, which was promulgated on Tuesday.

In the resolution, the NBC announced that Buhay would get two more seats in the House while Bayan Muna, Gabriela, Cibac and Apec would each get one more additional seat, based on the first-party rule or the Panganiban formula, which the Comelec used to determine the additional number of seats each qualifying party-list group will get.

The Comelec resolution was without prejudice to the proclamation of the other party-list groups that will later obtain at least 2 percent of the total votes cast for party-list groups to entitle them one seat or to the appropriate percentage of votes that will give them an additional seat.

The Comelec announced the winning 13 party-list groups but limited their proclamation to the first nominees.

In the report of the NBC's Tabulation Group and Supervisory Committee, "the projected maximum total party-list votes as of July 11, 2007, based on the votes actually canvassed but not included in Report No. 29, votes received but uncanvassed, and maximum votes expected for Pantar, Lanao del Norte, is 16,261,369," Resolution 07-72 said.

The Tabulation Group and Supervisory Committee said that the projected maximum votes for the 13 party-list groups are as follows:

Buhay, 1,178,747; Bayan Muna, 977,467; Cibac, 755,964; Gabriela, 621,718; Apec, 622,489; A Teacher, 492,369; Akbayan, 462,674; Alagad, 423,190; Butil, 409,298; Coop-Natco, 412,920; Anakpawis, 370,165; ARC, 375,846; and Abono, 340,151.

The formula, prescribed by the Supreme Court and developed by retired Supreme Court Chief Justice Artemio Panganiban, means that the additional seats the party-list groups will get depend on the total votes the first party, in this case Buhay, obtains.

"We got more than 6 percent of the votes in the last and final Comelec tally but (Bayan Muna) only had two seats proclaimed. Our only hope now is for the Supreme Court to declare this latest attack on the Bayan Muna and the party-list system abominable to the Constitution," Bayan Muna's lead counsel and third nominee, Neri Colmenares, told the INQUIRER.

Colmenares failed to become Bayan Muna's third party-list representative because of the first-party rule.

Bayan Muna has filed a protest against the formula at the high court. The militant party-list group prefers that the 2-4-6 formula, adopted by the Comelec in the past, be used to determine the additional party-list seats.

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# Miriam swears in son . . .

From page A1

nominations should be filed with the Comelec law department before the elections ended.

While a nominee can be substituted only when he dies, or his nomination is withdrawn by the party, or he becomes incapacitated, or he withdraws his acceptance of the nomination, "no substitution shall be allowed by reason of withdrawal after the close of polls," the Comelec noted.

## Still pending

The National Board of Canvassers (NBC) Resolution No. 07-72 showed ARC with 375,846 votes and so far, is only entitled to get one seat in the House of Representatives.

Top ARC officers expressed "disgust" over the proclamation despite its pending motion withdrawing the younger Santiago's nomination as the group's No. 1 nominee. Oscar Francisco, Kashmir Leyretana, Basilio Propongo and Isidro Suedad are the other ARC nominees.

"I don't know why they were rushing the oath-taking," Frank Roy Ribo, ARC national president, told the INQUIRER.

The ARC national executive committee passed a resolution on July 6 withdrawing the nomination of the younger Santiago as the group's top nominee, citing his alleged violations of the party's constitution and by-laws.

## Same page

Three days later, the ARC named Romulo Tapayan, a farmer from Agusan del Sur, as the substitute nominee.

Asked about his party's move to throw him out of the group, Archie Santiago said he "has no problems about it."

"As far as we're concerned, we're focused on rural development. If we have a problem, it may be because one or more members of the alliance may have a different agenda or program as opposed to rural development. But as far as I'm concerned, we are all on the same page," he said.

Ribo said Archie had all but abandoned the ARC since the group agreed to tap him as its No. 1 nominee. Until he approached the party and asked to be a nominee earlier this year, Archie had no previous association with the peasant organization, Ribo noted.

## Curious accommodation

The curious accommodation led not a few people within the party-list circles to believe that the ARC was fronting for Malacañang. Senator Santiago, an erstwhile staunch supporter of deposed President Joseph Estrada, is now backing President Macapagal-Arroyo.

At a press conference after swearing in her son, however, Senator Santiago lambasted the "group" within ARC that wanted to ease out her son after having his parents spend for the campaign.

"There is one group that does not have the support of the majority in the coalition which wants to seize this opportunity to have our son campaign and have us, his parents, spend whatever we could for his campaign. When the party (has) already won, it wants to snatch away the proper fruits of victory from those who worked in the process and claim it for itself," the senator said.

On the allegations that the ARC was a government front, she said that it was easy to make such an accusation.

## Regretful

Ribo said he "regretted" allowing the younger Santiago to join the ARC.

"It's really very regretful," he said. "I'm disgusted because he made commitments, but fulfilled none of them."

In a two-page resolution withdrawing the nomination, the ARC national council scored the younger Santiago for attending all but one meeting of the party since it agreed to accommodate him.

The council also criticized Santiago for failing to "report or account to the party such funds received in connection with the May 14, 2007 national elections."

It said his actions were "prejudicial to the interest and welfare for the party (and eroded) the trust and confidence bestowed on him and constitutes loss of confidence."

"Since we filed the notice, we've heard not a word from the Comelec," he said. "Yet, we just found out that he was about to take his oath."

## Real convenors

The senator, a former agrarian reform secretary, said the ARC began when she and its "real" convenors were still students at the University of the Philippines.

She said that through the years, each one followed his or her own path, with some like her becoming professionals and earning "as UP students should" while the others continued to help the poor.

The senator said that she would work with her son in Congress, particularly in addressing the "many loopholes" in the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

However, she said, she would still want him to be "independent of his mother."

## Land of 'talakitok'

Archie, her only surviving son, will not live in her shadow, the senator said.

"Because my shadow will not be here by 2010. My term expires by that time. I think I have reached the point of diminishing return in politics. I have never believed that I am God's great gift to Philippine politics unlike some of my colleagues in the Senate who labor under such delusion of which I intend to disabuse them by Monday," she said.

Ribo said he did not know why the senator rushed to put her son into the land of the "talakitok," referring to the elder Santiago's criticism of the House of Representatives over its failure to act on her bill seeking a ban on billboards.

# Pride of place proposed for Chief Justice...

From page A1

Villar and Speaker Jose de Venecia proposing a change in protocol that would allow the Chief Justice to be seated at the podium during the joint opening of Congress and Ms Arroyo's Sona on July 23.

Santiago said due recognition should be given to Puno, whom she described as an "activist and brilliant" magistrate, especially with the holding of the just-ended summit on extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances.

The summit, a brainchild of Puno, proposed several steps to curb the murders of activists and journalists, including urging Ms Arroyo to order a stop to the killings.

## Expanding CHR's powers

Malacañang appeared open to proposals at the summit to broaden the powers of the Commission on Human Rights to include prosecution.

But Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said proponents should lobby their case with Congress since the CHR was a constitutional body and legislation was required for any changes.

Ermita said the expansion of the CHR's powers and other recommendations of the summit participants were welcome because these "complemented the work that the Executive branch has been doing."

"Anything that would help address the problem, the Executive branch will take very seriously," said Ermita.

A group in the summit led by Justice Antonio Eduardo Nachura proposed that the CHR be allowed greater prosecution powers since it gets more complaints than the Department of Justice.

The CHR was perceived by summit delegates to be more of an "independent" body than the DOJ, giving complainants in cases of extrajudicial killings a sense of state impartiality.

But Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez appeared not too keen on expanding CHR's powers, believing that the power to prosecute should be limited to its existing prosecution arm within the DOJ.

Gonzalez also doubted whether the proposal could be made with just a simple amendment since it could require changing the Constitution itself.

Ermita said the summit was a "complementary effort to what" Ms Arroyo had been doing to stem the tide of killings.

"The President has mentioned often enough that we should stop the killings. We abhor killings," Ermita said.

## Recommendations welcomed

He said "it's very clear that the President is determined to put a stop to these and, therefore, what needs to be done is for us to be able to look at the other efforts that will discourage the undertaking of the particular unexplained killings."

Ermita added: "We would welcome the recommendations and to the extent that the executive branch can do something to implement what they are recommending in relation to what we are already implementing, then we will do it."

"After all, there's one objective. Stop the killings. What is the higher objective? Sanctity of life of the Filipino, observe human rights," he stressed.

Ermita admitted that the need to protect witnesses to extrajudicial killings was key to finding an end to the killing of leftist activists, media personalities and religious people.

He pointed to the strengthening of the Witness Protection Program as recommended by the Melo Commission, saying it was crucial to establishing "the confidence of our people in government to prosecute them and protect them."

## People's role

Ermita said resolving the killings was not just the job of the executive branch.

"The court has something to do with this. And the cooperation also of the people. People should cooperate so that we can put a stop to this."

Gonzalez acknowledged that the Human Security Act (HSA) had in effect expanded the power of the CHR.

Besides its power to investigate human rights cases, it could also "prosecute" cases just like the Department of Justice, but only in cases involving terrorism, he said. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE LEVEL OF MARKET TRANSACTION FEES FOR YEAR 2007 FOR THE PHILIPPINE WHOLESALE ELECTRICITY SPOT MARKET

ERC CASE NO. 2007-124 RC

THE PHILIPPINE ELECTRICITY MARKET CORPORATION (PEMC),
Applicant.

x----------x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on June 7, 2007, the Philippine Electricity Market Corporation (PEMC) filed with the Commission, pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 9136, an application for the approval of the level of Market Transaction Fees for year 2007 for the Philippine Wholesale Electricity Spot Market (WESM).

In the said application, PEMC alleged, among others, that:

1. The instant application is being filed to secure the approval of a new level of Market Transaction Fees for the year 2007 to be imposed on all transactions in the WESM, pursuant to Section 30 of Republic Act No. 9136, which reads:

   *"The cost of administering and operating the wholesale electricity spot market shall be recovered by the market operator through a charge imposed to all market members; Provided, That such charge shall be filed with and approved by the ERC."*

2. The aforesaid provision is pursuant to Clause 2.10 of the WESM Rules, which requires the Market Operator to develop the level of the charges, i.e. market fees, which will be approved by the PEMC Board of Directors before filing with this Commission for approval;
3. As provided in the WESM Rules, the PEM Board, during its meeting held on 27 April 2007, approved the level of the Market Transaction Fees for the WESM for the year 2007;
4. It is filing the instant application seeking only the approval of the new market transaction fee level in view of the increase in budgetary requirements It wishes to clarify that it is still adopting the approved market registration fees and the market fee structure, including the formula for the allocation to the generators for the recovery of the market transaction fee level. However, should the Commission approve PEMC's application for the Approval of the Pricing and Cost Recovery Mechanism for Reserves in the Philippine Wholesale Electricity Spot Market, the computation for apportioning the market transaction fees would consequently be changed to the following formula:

   Rate = Total Annual Market Transaction Fees (Php)/12 / (Total Generation (Energy) Metered Quantity + Total Reserve Scheduled for the Month (kWh))

5. The proposed level of Market Transaction Fees for the year 2007 is the total budgeted revenue requirements to defray its operating and capital expenditures;
6. This has been determined to be in the amount of Six Hundred Twenty Four Million, Four Hundred Eleven Thousand Pesos (PhP624,411,000.00);
7. The said amount is net of applicable taxes such as corporate income and value added taxes. It also does not cover possible charges in expenses due to changes in law, rules or regulations, compliance with regulatory requirements, adjustments for inflation, and other external factors;
8. It will cover several cost components, namely: (a) Personnel Services, which refers to salaries and benefits for its 122 employees; (b) Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE), which includes, among others, Honoraria and Allowances for PEMC Committees, Training Expenses, Repairs and Maintenance Costs, Expenses for the EC-WESM Support Office and the Consumer Education Fund; (c) Loan Payments to the National Transmission Company (TRANSCO); (e) Capital Expenditures, particularly the first phase of the Information System – Information Technology ("IS/IT") Three Year Plan; and, (f) Provision for Monitoring Facilities;
9. Based on initial indicative figures, the market fee rate will result in an imposition of PhP0.015509/kWh for Luzon (Energy only);
10. Taking into consideration various aspects (such as preparation of market fees application for the succeeding years and customary regulatory interval for approval), it prays that the approved market transaction level be deemed to be extended to the succeeding years until the approval of the subsequent structure and level of market fees; and
11. It further prays of the Commission to approve the level of Market Transaction Fees for the year 2007 for the Philippine Wholesale Electricity Spot Market

The Commission has set the application for hearing at the **ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City** on the following schedules:

| Date and Time | Particulars |
|---|---|
| **August 7, 2007** – Two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.) | Jurisdictional, Expository and Pre-trial Hearing |
| **August 15 and 22, 2007** – Two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.) | Evidentiary Hearing |
| **August 23, 2007** – Nine o'clock in the morning (9:00 A.M.) | Evidentiary Hearing |
| **August 29, 2007** – Two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.) | Evidentiary Hearing |

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing, at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding; and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document, letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and a concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments, subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

**WITNESS,** the Honorable **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.,** Chairman, the Honorable Commissioners, **RAUF A. TAN, ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN** and **MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA,** Energy Regulatory Commission, this 27th day of June 2007 at Pasig City

(Sgd.) **ATTY. FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN**
Executive Director

(PDI – July 12 & 19, 2007)

# Atienza new DENR head

From page A1

the Department of Environement and Natural Resources came as a shock to environmentalists, who dubbed him "the butcher of Arroceros."

"It's incredible. This would be a disaster for the whole country because his track record on environment compliance leaves much to be desired," said Regina Paterno, president of Winner Foundation, a nongovernment organization that is running the Arroceros Forest Park in Manila. *(See In the Know on this page.)*

As Manila mayor, Atienza in 2003 enraged environmentalists when he ordered the closure of the Arroceros park to give way to the building of an education office and a teacher's dormitory, sparking a lawsuit.

Environmentalists wanted the 2.2-hectare park preserved for being one of the few patches of greenery in a badly polluted city scarred with decaying buildings and houses.

Atienza's successor as mayor, Alfredo Lim, reopened the park to the public after assuming office three weeks ago.

Chit Paterno, a member of Winner, said: "After our experience with Atienza in Arroceros Park, that's just a tiny city forest, what about tomorrow, the whole country's natural resources?"

## Not a payback

In the Palace revamp, Assistant Press Secretary Jose Capadocia was appointed press undersecretary in place of Isabel de Leon, who resigned in June and migrated to the United States.

"The reason for moving (people in) the Cabinet is only available to the President herself," Ermita said. "Remember, our dictum in the Cabinet is—Cabinet members serve at the pleasure of the President."

Ermita denied the revamp, coming so close after the midterm elections, was a form of "political payback," telling reporters that Lotilla "has been asking (for it) since last year."

To demands from the Malacañang Press Corps for an explanation for the latest Cabinet changes, Ermita said: "Look, I thought I'm just doing my duty here by announcing to you some (appointments), but you're asking me why."

When reporters persisted, Ermita replied: "Secretary Lotilla since last year has been asking to leave government because you know, he told me, 'I was sucked into the government for 20 years now.'"

"He wants to take a rest. Don't you know that he's single?" said Ermita, eliciting chuckles.

He said Lotilla was not fired by Ms Arroyo for his apparent failure to complete the privatization of National Power Corp. (Napocor), National Transmission Corp. (Transco) and other government assets in the energy sector.

"No, it has nothing to do with failures anywhere," said Ermita. He told reporters there was no written resignation but that Lotilla had a meeting with Ms Arroyo where he expressed his intention to leave the Cabinet.

Ermita said Lotilla repeatedly called Ms Arroyo to beg for her indulgence, adding that up to the end, Ms Arroyo was "satisfied" with Lotilla's performance.

## Atienza qualified

Lotilla's name was among the Cabinet members recommended for reappointment by Ms Arroyo after failing to get the confirmation of the Commission on Appointments, Ermita said.

"But he reconsidered, saying he wished if he could be allowed already this time to leave," he said.

Asked about Atienza's qualifications, "Why, is there anything wrong about ex-Mayor Atienza?"

"Definitely, the President would not choose a Cabinet member to occupy a certain position if the President thinks he cannot handle that," said Ermita.

The Union of Local Government Authorities and Governors' League welcomed Atienza's appointment.

"We welcome the decision of President Arroyo to appoint Atienza as DENR secretary not only because of his competence and integrity but he will also serve as the voice of the local government units in the Cabinet," said Eastern Samar Gov. Ben Evardone, spokesperson of the two powerful groups.

## Reward for allegiance?

Ermita made it clear that Atienza was not being rewarded for his allegiance to Ms Arroyo, whose controversial acts included banning rallies at the historic Don Chino Roces Bridge (formerly Mendiola).

"I don't think so. Every time an appointment is made, people will be asking those questions," he said, citing the fact that at least 12 members from the House of Representatives had been appointed into the Cabinet.

"Then you will ask, is that a political payback? Not really. The President goes by who she thinks can help her in running government."

It was also during Atienza's time that an old heritage building in the center of the city, Jai Alai, came down.

Ermita said Ms Arroyo's economic team was intact.

Last month, Ms Arroyo instructed Ermita to order all presidential appointees in 117 government-owned and -controlled corporations and government financial institutions to submit their courtesy resignations.

## Cabinet's fate

But as of last week, only 301 appointees have tendered their resignations. None have been fired, so far.

The only changes that had taken place, before yesterday, involved Cabinet members, who in the first place were supposedly exempted from the revamp.

On June 30, Malacañang appointed Tarlac Rep. Gilbert Teodoro as defense secretary, replacing former police chief Hermogenes Ebdane, who is to return to his old post as public works secretary.

So will there be a major Cabinet shake-up?

"I keep on telling you that the President's announcement was for GOCCs and GFIs ... to submit their resignations. As far as the Cabinet is concerned, there was no instruction to submit their resignation," said Ermita.

## A trusted man

"However, I said don't be surprised when the President on her own suddenly feels that there's got to be a reshuffle, rigodon or changes of people in the Cabinet," he added. "All these things, I did not know myself until a few days before the decision (was) reached by the President."

Ermita said Ms Arroyo "always makes her own decision, keeps her cards close enough to her chest, and you can be sure that these are all based on a very good judgment by the President."

As regards Reyes, Ermita said: "Let us not prejudge people. Secretary Reyes had occupied several posts. And we could not say that he didn't perform" as secretaries of defense, interior and environment.

"He is a retired general. I'm sure we could trust a man like him in the same manner that the President trusted him," Ermita said.

Ms Arroyo has said that Reyes is "well-rounded" and can do any job required of him.

### IN THE KNOW

## Arroceros park: Atienza's 'legacy'

**By Cyril L. Bonabente**
*Inquirer Research*

THE LOT OCCUPIED BY THE Arroceros Forest Park used to be owned by the Land Bank of the Philippines. It was bought by the city of Manila for P65 million, using the city's education fund.

In 1993, Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim signed a memorandum of agreement with Winner Foundation giving the civic organization the right to develop the area as a forest park.

About a decade later, Lim's successor, Lito Atienza, announced his plan to build the office of the city schools division and a teachers' dormitory in the 2.2-hectare park.

Winner protested, saying the construction would endanger about 3,500 trees in the area, some of which were centuries old.

Atienza argued that teachers should benefit from the lot because it was bought using the city's education fund. He added that Winner technically had no rights over the park because the 1993 MOA was not approved by the city council.

### Case pending

In 2003, Winner asked the Manila Regional Trial Court to stop City Hall from taking over the park.

Days later, Atienza announced the closure of the park to give way to construction. The Manila court later rejected Winner's petition, stressing the need to determine the validity of the MOA first.

Winner again filed a preliminary injunction case in 2005. The case is awaiting resolution.

The May 2007 elections saw Lim's return as mayor of the country's capital. On his first day on the job, Lim reopened the Arroceros Forest Park and said no more structures would be built in the park.

Lim also vowed to renew the 1993 MOA for another 25 years.

Winner president Regina Paterno welcomed Lim's decision but lamented that 70 percent of the trees had been felled to give way to construction.

# Lotilla: I'd like to end my vow of poverty

From page A1

yet, Lotilla said that in his more than two decades in government—particularly during his two years as energy czar—he had not been able to perform much mental calisthenics.

The pressure of having to jump from one issue to another, he said, deprived him of whatever "intellectual depth" government service could afford.

"I want to have more time for that kind of thinking. In government, you don't have the luxury of time to think that deeply," he said. "I would like to end my vow of poverty and all the ancillary vows that come with it."

## Bachelor

A bachelor, Lotilla's frugal nature has been a source of both awe and amusement to energy industry players—and reporters.

He is said to have no TV set at home, making him one of Manila Electric Co.'s lifeline customers, or those using less than 100 kilowatt-hours of electricity a month.

## No surprise

Yesterday's announcement of President Macapagal-Arroyo's acceptance of his resignation actually did not come as a surprise to Lotilla.

"I don't recall when exactly I found out, but I've known for some days now," he said.

Speaking before more than 200 people at the League of Corporate Foundation's CSR Expo 2007, he somehow preempted the Malacañang announcement by hinting at leaving the Department of Energy.

"I'm sure my successor will do a good job in ensuring that all the reforms that have been put in place will be sustained," he said during his speech.

Shortly after answering some questions from the floor, the organizers announced the arrival of Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes—Lotilla's replacement.

Neither of the men acknowledged each other's presence, even if they were within less than a meter of each other.

Not even a glance was exchanged.

## Vacation and exercise

Talking to reporters later, Lotilla was still in a jovial mood, saying he was ready to take a much needed break.

LOTILLA: Back to intellectual pursuits.

"The first item on my agenda is to go to Palawan. I haven't gone to Palawan for the last two years, since I became energy secretary," he said. "And I also haven't been able to exercise regularly. I've actually put on some weight. So that's what I'm going to do."

He was silent on what his plans for his professional life were, saying only that he was still willing to help the government as best as he could—and if asked.

"It does not mean that I will not assist the government where I can. It's just full-time government service that I'm taking a break from," he said.

## Long overdue

June 18, the day heads of government-owned or -controlled corporations were asked to submit courtesy resignations, was not the first time Lotilla attempted to exit from the government.

"I've been resigning for years. It was only now that it was approved," he revealed. "I've always wanted to take a vacation, as I only intended to stay with the national government for two years. But after President Ramos' term, I was requested to at least help out the new government."

## More changes

Talk that Napocor president Cyril del Callar would also be replaced again surfaced, following Lotilla's resignation.

According to the industry grapevine, either former Philippine National Police chief Arturo Lomibao or former Joint Congressional Power Commission chair and Lanao del Norte Rep. Alipio Cirilo Badelles would take Del Callar's place.

# 'Trees for Life' to plant 20M seedlings by December

From page A1

Ms Arroyo made the announcement after personalities from the media, Church, government, business and industry, and other sectors pledged to adopt trees for planting as part of the "Trees for Life" program.

Among those who turned up at the event were Bro. Eddie Villanueva of the Jesus Is Lord Movement, Army chief Gen. Romeo Tolentino, retired Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus, Gina Lopez of ABS-CBN and businessman Jose Concepcion.

## Subject to private rights

The Trees for Life is a joint project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Green Army to plant 20 million seedlings across the country between now and December.

The program targets the reforestation of protected areas, critical watersheds, mangroves, coasts, agro-forestry and fruit tree areas, urban parks, green campuses, camps and subdivisions.

The President, however, stressed that her proclamation of La Mesa as a protected watershed was "subject to private rights."

"[It's] subject to private rights because there's always a formula whereby we can protect both environment and development," she said in her speech at the La Mesa Eco-park in Quezon City.

The La Mesa watershed covers a total land area of 2,659 hectares straddling the cities of Quezon and Caloocan, and Rodriguez town in Rizal province. It's a vital source of water for Metro Manila.

The La Mesa Dam serves as a holding reservoir for water coming from the trans-basins of Umiray, Angat and Ipo watersheds, which have been declared watershed reservations.

The proclamation virtually completes the protection of the network of trans-basins from contamination, assuring the quality, quantity and security of the water for the metropolis, according to the DENR.

## Public clamor

The proclamation was in response to a public clamor to protect the watershed from any form of degradation, particularly the one posed by a housing project for a government agency.

Lopez, managing director of Bantay Kalikasan that fiercely opposed the construction of housing projects for executives and former employees of the Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System, greeted the announcement with mixed feelings.

"I'm happy with the announcement," Lopez told reporters. "But I don't know what subject to private rights means. I hope they don't build housing on top of our water supply."

She added: "If you declare it as watershed, there should be [no conditions] because private rights and watershed are two different things. They conflict with each other. You should choose one over the other."

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes said the proclamation would deter any "destructive activities" in the area, as well as ensure potable water supply for Metro Manila residents.

"That will have to be discussed," Reyes, who was just named yesterday the energy secretary, said when asked whether Ms Arroyo's proclamation was subject to "private rights."

## Environment plus dev't

Mt. Inayawan is located in Nunungan, Lanao del Norte. It's described as a natural rainforest rich in biodiversity and wildlife, where Maranao settlers live.

In her speech, the President highlighted the need for the government and the people to put importance to both the environment and development.

"Before there's the debate between environment and development. We're no longer called upon to make that conventional choice," Ms Arroyo said in her speech. "We should choose both."

"While we build factories, people need to breathe air. While we build bridges, people need to swim in clean waters. That's why we should take care of both environment and development," she said.

## Global warming

The President mentioned infrastructure projects undertaken by the government, such as the flood control project in Caloocan-Malabon-Navotas-Valenzuela area, as well as its green projects, like the Bangui wind project in Ilocos Norte, among others.

"Global warming is a threat to our waters and to our clean air especially in an island economy like the Philippines," she said.

"That's why when we plan our energy reliability, wind, sun and biofuel will reduce our dependence on fossil fuel for energy and help mitigate global warming," she said.

Ms Arroyo praised the prime movers of Trees for Life, as well as the individuals and groups that committed to help plant the 20 million seedlings raised by the DENR and Green Army, and their partners.

"This kick-off program of the recovery of Angat and La Mesa forest, and the protection of Metro Manila's ecology are something for our youth and the generations to come," she said.

"Let millions of trees grow lush here in La Mesa, and let millions more green the Philippine countryside," the President said.

Among those who pledged to adopt the trees and mobilize people to plant them were Villanueva, Tolentino, Corpus, Lopez and Concepcion.

# *US Congress seeks safer, but not safe, cigarettes*

From page A1

The product is the cigarette—generally acknowledged as anything but safe. Smoking accounts for nearly one in five deaths in the United States.

That toll can be reduced, tobacco foes say, and they point to a bill that is expected to pass a Senate committee on Wednesday as the tool to make it happen.

The legislation would give the Food and Drug Administration the same authority over cigarettes and other tobacco products that the regulatory agency already has over countless other consumer products. It's not something the agency necessarily wants, according to past comments by the FDA commissioner, Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach.

The bill would let the FDA regulate the levels of tar, nicotine and other harmful components of tobacco products. Cigarette smoke alone contains some 4,000 chemicals, more than 40 of which are known to cause cancer.

"Are we going to cut cancer in half with FDA control? No. Can we do with cigarettes things that are important in regulating a product to minimize its toxicity? Yes, I think we can," said Dr. David Burns of the University of California, San Diego, scientific editor of several surgeon general reports on tobacco.

New products would need FDA approval before they could be sold, according to the legislation.

The bill also would authorize the FDA to set national standards for tobacco products to control how they are made, as well as force the disclosure of their ingredients, including compounds and additives, and in what quantities.

That, supporters claim, should help expose and ultimately limit the ways cigarettes are engineered to the detriment of the public's health.

"This bill wisely doesn't try to predict what a cigarette will look like once the FDA begins to take action. Instead, it says to scientists at the FDA, 'You have the power to require changes in tobacco products in whatever ways you believe, based on the science, that will reduce the harmfulness of the products or the addictiveness of the products,'" said Matthew Myers, president of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids. The group, once known as the National Center for Tobacco-Free Kids, has long supported the bill, which has faltered in previous Congresses.

## No safe cigarette

No one among those for or against the Senate bill, mirrored by matching legislation in the House of Representatives, believes it could result in a safe cigarette. There is consensus that there is no such thing. But some foes of the bill maintain it could create that impression.

"It would still be a deadly product. They are not going to make it a safe product by taking out particular smoke constituents. The problem is the public is going to perceive the product is safe because the FDA has assumed jurisdiction," said Dr. Michael Siegel, a Boston University School of Public Health professor.

Advocates say the bill would, at a minimum, give the FDA the authority to go where the scientific evidence takes it and only then make decisions based on the science.

"There is a broad range of actions that the FDA potentially could take, some of which we understand now and some we can only see dimly," Burns said.

"To say that there's nothing we can do is nihilistic in thinking and inconsistent with science."

The bill also would keep tobacco companies from tinkering with their products in ways that would make them any more dangerous, supporters add.

"The tobacco industry would not be allowed to manipulate the ingredients—like increase nicotine or decrease nicotine or whatever they do—without disclosing it," said M. Cass Wheeler, chief executive officer of the American Heart Association.

"The bill would put the burden of proof on industry to demonstrate to the FDA that what they're doing would not be more harmful," Wheeler said. *AP*

# Dismissed judge annoys SC anew

By Jerome Aning

ANNOYED AT HIS REPEATED FILING OF MOtions for reconsideration and other petitions, the Supreme Court has threatened to cite for indirect contempt a judge it sacked last year for admitting he consulted "elves" before making a decision.

In a June 12 resolution signed by all 14 justices, the high court chided Florentino Floro Jr. for his "obvious disdain" as he "incessantly filed pleading after pleading" to reverse his dismissal as Malabon City Regional Trial Court judge.

"Judge Floro is hereby given a warning that he can be held liable for indirect contempt should he persist in disregarding lawful orders of this Court," the justices said.

Indirect contempt covers offenses against courts, such as disobedience and resistance to a lawful order, and is punishable by a P30,000 fine, six months in jail, or both.

Since his dismissal by the high court in March 2006, Floro has filed at least nine motions for reconsideration and other petitions, all of which were either denied or "noted without action" because the judge failed to present any meritorious argument or substantial evidence in support of the new pleadings.

He has "inundated" the court, particularly the writer of the decision, with numerous pleadings "avowing ungodly reprisal," personal letters and telephone calls regarding his case, they noted.

His last two petitions before the high tribunal included one requesting that another associate justice be tasked to write the decision on the cases he filed. Both petitions were "noted without action" by the Supreme Court and ordered "expunged from the records."

Only meritorious arguments and substantial evidence can convince the court to modify or reverse its ruling on Floro's case, which has been resolved with finality, the justices said.

The court ordered Floro's separation from the judicial service "due to a medically disabling condition of the mind that renders him unfit to discharge the functions of his office."

Floro admitted to consulting three dwarfs when making a decision. He also claimed to have powers to predict the future and inflict pain on evil doers. He even conducted "healing sessions" in his chambers.

The dismissed judge has since gained support from occult practitioners and believers in the paranormal from all over the world.

# Prosecutors want proof of Garcia lawyers' claim

By Jocelyn R. Uy

SHOW US PROOF

Prosecutors are seeking evidence that their lawyers have lost contact with the wife and children of former military comptroller Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia to erase the suspicion that the lawyers had a hand in their clients' flight.

Earlier this month, lawyers Rainier Madrid and Alvin Carullo asked the Sandiganbayan Second Division to allow them to withdraw their representation for Garcia's family because they no longer know their whereabouts.

Garcia's wife, Clarita Depakakibo-Garcia and children Ian Carl, Juan Paulo and Timothy Mark, were named co-respondents in the plunder charges filed against the retired AFP comptroller in connection to his purported ill-gotten wealth amounting to more than P300 million.

Madrid and Carullo informed the anti-graft court that despite "diligent efforts" they failed to locate their clients who disappeared shortly after they were indicted for plunder by the Office of the Ombudsman in April 2005.

The lawyers, in a hearing last July 6, also pointed out that even Garcia was not aware of his family's whereabouts.

"The case is not an ordinary case, involving as it does millions of public funds. Therefore, it behooves upon withdrawing counsels to show and prove their allegations of good cause as required by the [Code of Professional Responsibility]," stated the prosecution.

It also asserted that they should satisfactorily show to the court what "diligent efforts" they exerted in locating Garcia's family to justify their withdrawal without a written consent from them.

Also, in objecting to the lawyers' motion, the prosecution also noted that their move to withdraw from the case came only after they have exhausted legal remedies to prevent their clients' trial.

This, even if they had failed to hale Garcia's family to court from the very beginning of the case, said the government prosecutors.

The opposition-comment was signed prosecutors Danilo Lopez, Jose Balmeo Jr., and Joseph Capistrano.

"On the assumption that what they are saying are true... they should at least present proof what are those diligent efforts they have exerted so as to erase any taint of doubt or suspicion that they have a hand in this apparent flight," they said.

## THE DAILY GOSPEL

Thursday, July 19, 2007
15th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Ex 3:13-20
Gospel: Matthew 11:28-30

Jesus spoke thus, "Come to me, all you who work hard and who carry heavy burdens and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart; and you will find rest. For my yoke is good and my burden is light."

**Commentary**

*Moses asks God's name. It is "I AM" who sends me to you. This is the God of the past, the present, and the future. This is the God who sends and cares about people and their dignity and life. This is the God who is personal and wants a people for himself. This is the God of all that is. This is the God of all the nations, Egypt included, even if they do not know him. Moses is to go to the elders of the Hebrews and ask for three days in the desert so that they may worship their God: "I AM." Moses is told that Egypt will resist and they will know God by power/might and force and will let the people go. This is our ancient history, the foundation of freedom, and the beginning of being made into the people of God.*

*This God "I AM" says to us, "Come to me you who are burdened." The yoke we bear is the cross of Christ, the yoke of community that works together for the kingdom of God on earth and the yoke of joy that is given to us to refresh us and help us as we journey to fullness of life that is the freedom of the children of God.*

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# OPINION

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## Unprecedented

**EDITORIALS**

THE SUPREME COURT-ORGANIZED "NATIONAL consultative summit" on extrajudicial killings and enforced disappearances passed into history the other day. We expect the nation to feel its impact, even to appreciate its historic import, in the coming months.

"This is a landmark summit," peace advocate Ed Garcia, a member of the 1986 Constitutional Commission, told the delegates. No one at the Manila Hotel, where the summit was scaled, would have argued otherwise.

In sheer scope, it was extraordinary: as more than one observer noted, the entire Philippine political spectrum—at one point Chief Justice Reynato Puno pointed to "the rainbow of interests"—was represented.

In both design and execution, it was unprecedented. In the exercise of its expanded rule-making power, the Supreme Court had asked hundreds of "stakeholders of the justice system" (Puno again) to raise suggestions and propose solutions. (More than 500 showed up.)

Dozens of proposals issued out of the 12 workshops (each one facilitated by an associate justice). Not all of the proposals, it must be noted, were directed to the Supreme Court. There were proposals for the Executive, for Congress, even for civil society groups. Some were virtually unanimous, for instance the proposal that a law specifying command responsibility be enacted by Congress. (Speaker Jose de Venecia, who attended the summit on the last day, promised prompt action.) Some were, well, less than unanimous, such as a proposal to condemn not only all forms of violence, but "armed struggle" in particular.

We must note that, instead of finding a creative excuse to decline any participation in the summit, as it has done when invited by Senate investigating committees, the Armed Forces leadership sent a large contingent of delegates, who vigorously took part in the discussions. We believe this is a good sign.

The expansion of the scope of proposals was a welcome development, because even with judges who see the 1986 Constitution as "the most pro-human rights of our fundamental laws," in Puno's formulation, the judiciary remains essentially a passive branch of government. Former Senate President Jovito Salonga sounded a cautionary note that was echoed by other lawyers: "We have to remind ourselves that the judiciary ... has limited powers, for its powers are merely procedural."

But it is true, as Garcia said, that the summit has "created momentum," for change, for a resolution of the deadly problem. We hope the momentum will extend beyond the legal system.

## Inevitable

MUCH OF THE COVERAGE OF THE UNPRECEdented Supreme Court-organized summit focused, naturally, on Chief Justice Reynato Puno's condemnation of the political environment that allows political killings and politically motivated disappearances in the first place. The condemnation is implied, but it is there.

When Puno spoke of the Executive running "roughshod over our human rights [via] the adept deployment of the commander in chief powers," he was in fact speaking of the Marcos dictatorship. When he described "a supine legislature" betraying human rights "by defaulting to enact appropriate laws," he was in fact describing the Batasan Pambansa in Marcos' time.

And yet, when Puno spoke of the members of the 1986 Constitutional Commission as "endowed with prophetic eyes," he meant that the political circumstances that explain many of the Constitution's safeguards are relevant again. "For two decades later, we would be bedevilled by extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances that would expose the frailties of our freedom, the inadequacy of our laws, if not the inutility of our system of justice."

What does this all mean? That it is precisely a vacuum of leadership in the political branches of government, on the issue of the killings and disappearances, that forced the judiciary to take the lead. Puno, we must remember, has always argued that the political branches have enormous room for maneuver in our system of government. In his dissent on the people's initiative case, for instance, his position was to give politicians as much breathing room as they needed for the political exercise.

That the Supreme Court had to step into the breach, therefore, is inevitably an indictment of the failure of the Executive to arrest the spiral of violence.

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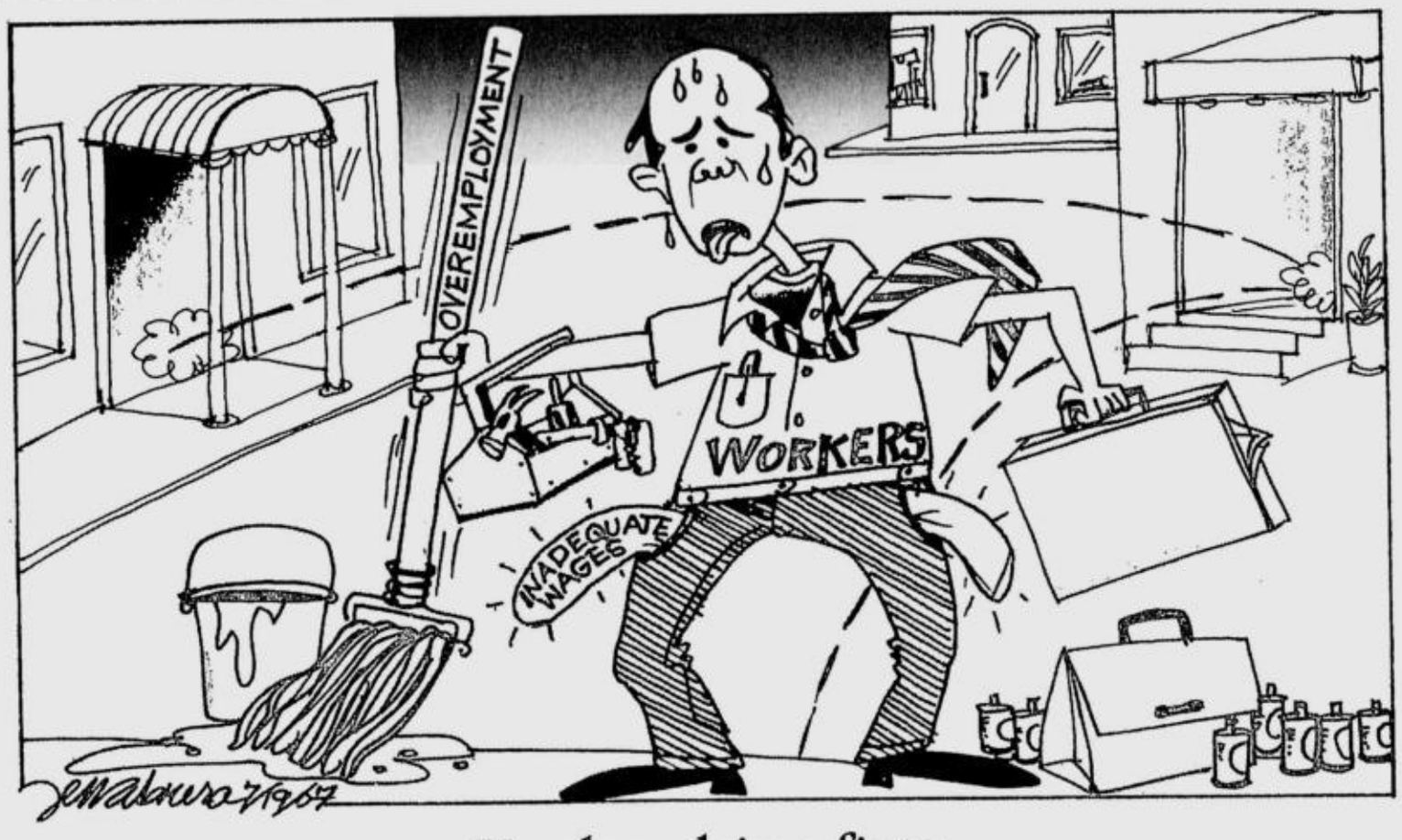


## Unclenching fists

**VIEWPOINT**

*Juan L. Mercado*

"YOU CAN'T SHAKE HANDS WITH A clenched fist." And the beheading of 10 Marines, slain in a Basilan ambush, and the mutilation of their genitals infuriated even those who've backed peace talks with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

Demands for harsh reprisals have surged to a stridency unheard since Brig. Gen. Teodulfo Bautista and his men were ambushed at a Patikul peace meeting. Upon assurances of safe passage by Sulu rebels, they went unarmed—and were cut down.

The decapitations fractured the Third Geneva Convention. Article 13 prohibits disfigurement, whether of prisoners or the dead. But international law rarely figures in the calculus of many MILF leaders, even as countries, the world over, have made "command responsibility" a keystone of governance. That spurns accountability under standards acceded to by 194 countries and Philippine laws. This disdain trickles down to foot soldiers.

What stokes today's raw anger, however, is not the MILF's expanded claim to Basilan as its territory. Sez who? snapped columnist Ana Marie Pamintuan. That has been the near-universal reaction. "And what law empowered them to kill trespassers?" asked Cebu Daily News' Ricky Poca. "That's not the argument of a civilized mind."

No, it is not. Indeed, Islam prohibits suicide, and requires that corpses from conflict be respected. Families of combatants, as well as their sick, old and clergy, must be protected. "Do not aggress as God does not like aggressors." (Koran: 2:190)

Departure from this humane standard, shared by all major faiths, stokes today's fury. Those who looted the cell phone of Pfc. Reuben Doronio sent mocking messages to his family. *"Binaboy ang aking anak,"* wailed a mother at the Villamor Air Base necrological rites. Translation dilutes the anguish in *binaboy*. "They mutilated my son like a pig."

This is a brutal negation of a common humanity—done to "a piece of divinity in us that owes no homage unto the sun," Thomas Browne writes.

Yet, it was not always this way. Muslims, lumad and Christians, for years, lived side-by-side in peace, as Philipp'ne Human Development Report case studies note. "Our playmates and classmates were all Maranaos... And we went caroling to both Christian and Maranao homes. During Ramadan, we fasted... We called the *hilot* who helped our mother during deliveries '*ina*'—the Maranao term for mother."

Migration into Mindanao, land grabbing, fraud by corrupt Muslim "leaders" and embedded poverty were fuel for revolt. Even today, life expectancy in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, at 52 years, is almost a generation shorter than the 71 for Cebu. Using international development yardsticks, Maguindanao finds itself bracketed between India and Yemen.

The 1970-72 onslaught by lowland "Ilaga" vigilantes and rogue military lit the fuse for the eruption. Damage spread with the October 1972 Muslim National Liberation Front uprising. And the MILF continued this campaign of armed conflict while negotiating, after the MNLF crumbled from Nur Misuari's inept leadership. Misuari spoke of carving six-lane highways in his native Sulu. He refused to be bothered by a literacy scraping 58 percent. Seven out of 10 lacked potable water.

"Peace is not only better than war but infinitely more arduous," George Bernard Shaw once said. And the past half-century has seen painful efforts to rebuild bridges—from regular consultations between ulama and bishops to today's peace talks with international cooperation. Malaysia is "referee" in peace talks with the MILF.

In his Feb. 20, 1981 address to Muslim representatives in Davao, the late Pope John Paul II summed up the search for common values: "I deliberately address you as brothers: that is certainly what we are, because we are members of the same human family, whose efforts, whether people realize it or not, tend toward God and the truth that comes from him. But we are especially brothers in God, Who created us and Whom we are trying to reach, in our own ways, through faith, prayer and worship, through the keeping of His law and through submission to His design."

That hope has been further blurred by the MILF's stances: admission of staging the ambush; pledges to punish those who violated Islamic tenets (let alone Filipino and international standards); then refusal to identify or hand over the perpetrators. Meanwhile, it flaunts the unproven claims of 23 Marines killed.

That splashes fuel on an already raging fire. It does little to allay already deep suspicion that the MILF harbors foreign terrorists. And its *de-cajon*, brush-off claim that attacks are staged by rogue commanders, not under its control, is wearing thin.

The issues of transparency, responsibility, justice and impunity must be addressed. Whether Abu Sayyaf or MILF members did the mutilation and looting of the fallen cannot just be brushed aside. A reassessment of the peace talks does not cancel the peace process. Fairness reinforces that process. And it is necessary because many of the insurgent grievances are legitimate.

But we cannot just skid back to normality, as if nothing happened. After all, the MILF does not live on another planet. Like the rest of us, its members find themselves in an international community that holds standards to set us off from savages.

What really is at stake here is whether we can end this discord in our time, so that all our grandchildren can live in peace. Failure to do that will only dump on them this old conflict, made more lethal by al-Qaida aberrations of a faith that teaches that Allah is "the merciful, the compassionate..."

* * *

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## Dead or alive

**THERE'S THE RUB**

*Conrado de Quiros*

AN INQUIRER READER, NORMA DOLLAGA, has a reasonable fear. If we don't watch out, she warns, a song like "Tatsulok" may end up being banned under the antiterror law. Its lyrics go: *"Lumilipas ang hininga ng kay raming mga tao/ At ang dating lunting bukid ngayo'y sementeryo/ Totoy kumilos ka! Baligtarin and tatsulok/ At tulad mong dukha ang ilagay mo sa tuktok.* (The people are well-nigh gasping their last/ The once lush fields have become graveyards/ Totoy, act now, invert the pyramid!/ And put the poor and bedraggled like you at the top of it)."

Well, that song, composed by Rom Dongeto and originally sung by him and Noel Cabangon when they still formed the redoubtable Buklod (it was popularized more recently by Bamboo), does resonate with activist sentiments. The triangle or pyramid there has nothing to do with mystical elements. It refers to the kind of society we have, where a few lord it over the many. The call is for Totoy, or the young Juan de la Cruz, to rise to invert that pyramid, or put the many to rule the few.

That is not entirely being *praning*. If you recall (or those of you old enough to do so), that was how it was during the first days of martial law. The people in charge of public order and safety decreed among other things that the youth should wear short hair, long hair being a definite sign of rebelliousness and a terrorist act against good taste. Young men, in particular, caught after curfew (that was another thing the martial law government imposed) did not just have to cut grass in the gray dawn at Camps Crame and Aguinaldo, they had their hair cut as well.

Lest we forget, too, Ariel Ureta, a hugely famous TV personality then, got a serious chiding for parodying "*Sa ikauunlad ng bayan, disiplina ang kailangan*" with "*Sa ikauunlad ng bayan, bisekleta ang kailangan.*"

Martial law had sundry other inanities, including a prissy and completely hypocritical campaign against smut—that has always been a handmaiden of tyranny, as abundantly evidenced by the Nazis' crackdown on cabarets and other houses of ill repute, including those with a repute for mounting satirical revues, but that is for another day. I make these comparisons simply because, to repeat the point I made yesterday, the antiterror law isn't just a prelude to martial law, it is to a great extent martial law. The antiterror law is the Human Security Act only in the sense that Marcos' martial law was the New Society. You know you are looking at tyranny when tyrants start manufacturing words like this: it is Orwellian Newspeak.

I've followed some of the debates on the antiterror law, its detractors arguing how that law, such as that majestic word can ever be applied to it, is easily subject to abuse. They've pointed out the specific provisions that make it so. Frankly, I think that misses the point entirely. The point is not that the HSA is subject to abuse, the point is that the HSA is an abuse. The point is not that the HSA is a necessity that carries dangerous provisions, the point is that the HSA is a superfluity that by, of and in itself is the most dangerous thing in the world.

Looking at how the HSA might be abused is splitting hairs. That is not the problem. The problem is that it will be used by people who have absolutely no right to use it. The problem is that it is giving stones to a retarded child in a glass house, my apologies to retarded children who do not deserve the comparison. Can anything resembling good or devoid of pain possibly come from fighting terror that was conceived by Juan Ponce Enrile in the Senate, that will be executed by Norberto Gonzales, that will be interpreted by Raul Gonzalez, and that will be affirmed by Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo?

The arguments against the specific provisions that guarantee abuse presume that these people will somehow be deterred by being shown to have overstepped the limits of the law out of fear of being chided by the courts, especially the Supreme Court, or shamed before the international community. Well, two names refute that completely: Miguel Zubiri and Jonas Burgos. You are not deterred from making a non-elected candidate senator and you are not deterred from burying a high-profile *desaparecido* twice over, you won't be deterred by anything, neither being chided by the courts nor embarrassed to stand before the world community.

No, dreading the martial law or martial law-like inanities above is by no means being paranoid. I do not know that these virtual martial law executors will go to the extent of banning certain songs or cutting hair (the latter being a thing that threatens me personally), but I do know one thing: This nastiness called the Human Security Act puts us completely at their mercy.

I'm all for questioning the validity of the law before the Supreme Court. But even that misses the point, too. Quite simply, there is a court in this country, which is infinitely more supreme than the Supreme Court, and which is the only court that can stop this, nothing else will. That is the court of public opinion, or more than that, the court of sovereign will, or still more than that, the court of people power. The Supreme Court itself takes its cue from it, the Supreme Court itself bows before it. Questioning the legality of the HSA before the Supreme Court is like questioning the wisdom of including cow dung among the dishes before the caterer: It is dignifying stupidity.

But that brings me to the pure terror I'm experiencing these days. I don't know which is the more terrifying: their antiterror law or our antihuman, antilife, antichrist lack of antipathy toward it. To say that this thing will murder us all is in fact to make one monumental presumption:

That is that we are still alive.

# Keeping a balanced mind on HSA

**POLITICAL TIDBITS**

*Belinda Olivares-Cunanan*

IT'S GOOD TO KEEP A BALANCED MIND TOward the Human Security Act of 2007 (HSA), more popularly known as the antiterrorism law. The militant elements are naturally nervous about it, the way they were about the issuance of national IDs in previous years and other instances where they felt their rights were being curtailed. Such militancy about rights is good in that it keeps our lawmakers, jurists and law enforcers sensitive to this issue. But it should be stressed that no law is created perfect and our experience has been that laws are refined as they are applied.

* * *

This new law should be implemented instead of stopped by the Supreme Court. After all, it took nearly five years before Congress passed it. As former House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles pointed out, Sen. Aquilino Pimentel alone introduced more than 100 amendments. Moreover, the courts are there to curtail abuses, and it's encouraging that the activist Puno Court seems to be more sensitive to human rights than any other Court.

The militants also complain that under the HSA, terror suspects could be detained for three days without charge. But it should be noted that in the United Kingdom, the cradle of constitutional democracy, the antiterrorism law allows detention of suspects without charge for a maximum of 28 days and that at present a debate rages about extending that period. After the attempted car bombings in the United Kingdom at the end of last month, law enforcement agencies are clamoring to extend it to 45 days or even 90 days. Prime Minister Gordon Brown and the British public are said to be supportive of the move.

Suspending the new HSA could only encourage terrorists to strike.

* * *

Rome-based Filipino sculptor-painter Tomas Concepcion is the right person to plead for Fr. Giancarlo Bossi, who has been held in captivity by the Abu Sayyaf since last month. Speaking to the media at the Marco Polo Hotel in Davao City, while preparing to launch his sentimental *balik-Mindanao,* one-man exhibit in the city, Tomas said he rushed a painting of Father Bossi, based on his picture in Italian newspapers, in order to start a signature campaign for his release. He's the right person to do so, for he synthesizes the best of both Italian and Muslim worlds.

Tomas comes from a Maranao royal family on his mother's side, and over the years he has been actively involved with his roots, especially when he served as labor sector representative in the House of Representatives during the Ramos administration. Trained in the United States and Europe, he has had a successful artistic career in Italy during the past 40 years, for which he won from President Macapagal-Arroyo a presidential award of merit. But even as the artist hobnobbed with European high society, he has also been deeply involved as a Filipino labor leader in Italy, using his influence with Italian politicians to help the OFWs legalize their status and improve their plight. Like Father Bossi, who has served the poor in Sulu, Tomas worked for the Pinoy masses.

* * *

Before her 48 member-troupe left to stage National Artist Alejandro Roces' modern Filipino *zarzuela* in the United States last month, I told Cecile Alvarez it took guts to attempt a US road show. She had directed Roces' "Something to Crow About," which revolves around the favorite Filipino pastime of cockfighting and village life, for its Manila premiere in May 2006 during the 31st World Congress of the Unesco-International Theater Institute. It bagged for Roces and Alvarez the Aliw Awards for best play and direction, respectively. But through sheer determination, the cooperation of the Philippine Consulate in New York, the Department of Tourism and the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, and with the encouragement of President Arroyo, who viewed it as part of the government's "cultural caregiving" for overseas Filipinos, the US staging of the zarzuela was indeed something to crow about. Its timing was also right: the 109th anniversary of Philippine Independence and the 146th birth anniversary of Dr. Jose Rizal. Pinoys in New York joined hands to make it a success, even providing meals and lodging for some of the members of the cast.

* * *

It played from June 21-24 at New York's experimental La Mama Theater, with the opening matinee graced by, among others, Permanent Representative to the UN Hilario Davide, Consul-General Cecile Rebong and INQUIRER founding chair Eggie Apostol, who was then doing the rounds of Broadway with pianist Della Besa. Davide led the standing ovation and congratulated a beaming Roces for his "beautiful, hilarious, excellent, very Pinoy, brilliant" production. Cecile noted that Eggie and Della were rolling with laughter at the witty dialogue. From New York, it was off to the West Coast for a one-night show at Glendale's legendary Alex Theater and a matinee at the University of Santa Clara Theater in San Jose, California.

* * *

LA-based writer Rene Villaroman of the Asian Journal noted that it had all the elements of a Pinoy production: the love triangle, feud between two families, the fiesta, Catholicism and a happy ending. Cecile pointed out that since live cocks couldn't be allowed on stage, live dancers dressed like roosters and the acrobatic scenes were reprised by Ben Goquinco from the original choreography of his mother, National Artist for Dance Leonor Orosa Goquinco. Villaroman lauded the "intuitive and precise directing" of Cecile, the "artful and imaginative choreography" of Gigi Velarde-David and the musical direction of Ferdinand Dimadura. Aside from lead actors Lionel and Cynthia Guico and Joel Trinidad, mention should be made of playwright Frank Rivera and the cameo roles by veteran actor Bernardo Bernardo and McDonald's top honcho George Yang as the Supreme Court Chief Justice.

# World Day of Justice

**HUMAN FACE**

*Ma. Ceres P. Doyo*

LAST TUESDAY, JULY 17, WAS WORLD DAY OF Justice. The day marked a milestone in the history of international law and international justice. Nine years ago, in 1998, 120 states attending the Plenipotentiary Conference in Rome adopted the Rome Statute, the founding treaty of the International Criminal Court (ICC). As of today, 139 states have signed and 105 have ratified.

It should be noted that while celebrations were taking place all over the world, here in the Philippines a summit on extrajudicial killings attended by stakeholders from civil society, the government and the church, as well as legal experts and individuals in search for justice, was taking place.

Here are some pertinent facts about the ICC. The ICC is the first permanent international judicial body capable of trying individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes when national courts are unable or unwilling to do so.

The ICC represents one of the significant opportunities for the world to prevent or significantly reduce the deaths and devastation that result from conflicts. The Rome Statute of the ICC came into force on July 1, 2002 and since then, much has been achieved with the establishment of the court. Located at the Hague in the Netherlands, the court is now a fully-functional institution. The senior court officials are seated in place and are proceeding with formal investigations.

"Birthday parties" were held in many parts of the world last Tuesday and here in the Philippines, NGOs held a forum and a film showing.

One significant development is Japan's formal ratification of the ICC treaty yesterday at the United Nations headquarters in New York. With Japan in, 105 states have ratified the ICC treaty. There are more than 30 other countries that have signed but have not ratified it. The Philippines is among them.

Last year, the Senate, the House and the Commission on Human Rights made resolutions for the ratification of the statute. But President Macapagal-Arroyo has not transmitted the document to Congress so that the ratification would be done.

Most of the world's democracies (all but one European Union government), most of sub-Saharan Africa, most of Latin America and the Caribbean have joined the ICC.

The ICC budget is about 90 million euros a year and Japan will assume about 19 percent of it. Japan has also nominated a judicial candidate for election to the court in December.

Universal ratification and greater cooperation from governments in securing arrests are among the ICC's important goals. The international support for the ICC shows the growing consensus that impunity on the part of perpetrators of massive atrocities will no longer be tolerated. There is a court of last resort to which the aggrieved could go.

The court is currently investigating grave mass crimes in four countries: Uganda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and the Central African Republic. It has issued seven arrest warrants.

Later this year, the court will begin hearing the case against Thomas Lubanga Dyilo on the use of child soldiers.

The Philippine Coalition of the ICC is a network of individuals and organizations committed to generate support for the ICC through information and lobbying so that the Philippine government would ratify the Rome Statute. It is part of an international network of about 2,000 civil society groups that support the universal acceptance of the ICC.

Today the court is truly international, permanent, fully functional and becoming attuned to the cries of affected communities. It reflects the major legal systems of all geographic regions of the world and it can hold individuals accountable for massive crimes.

* * *

**Good PCIJ stuff.** The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) is donating hundreds of books and other publications on investigative journalism and related topics to institutions and individuals who have need for them. Please e-mail marketing@pcij.org or call 9293117 for the titles and how to get them.

* * *

**Good Samaritans in cyberspace.** Have you ever encountered major problems with your computer, like desperately trying to retrieve files that vanished? And cried buckets?

My e-mail folders containing about four years of mail (from readers included), attachments, images and documents suddenly vanished. For two weeks all efforts to retrieve them from where they lay hidden did not work. Although I am right-brained (writers and artists usually are), I followed website to-dos in sequence and I must have earned a doctorate in computer software tinkering, but still no results.

I sought help from God of cyberspace and I got a response from the Pinoy blog Couch Camote of Ruben Canlas Jr. who turned out to be the CEO of Dig It All (as in digital) Solutions.

He and the Good Samaritans of his office (open-source advocates with strong left brains) came to my rescue and made me a charity case even though I was willing to pay an arm and a leg. It took a whole day of work to retrieve my files, but the effort was worth it, thanks to Ruben, Data and Lee.

As journalists we always seem to know where to find help for others in need. Then suddenly we are the needy.

Dig it All is mainly into website development and is on the 19th floor of Medical Plaza on San Miguel Avenue in Ortigas Center, Pasig City. Tel 9107788, http://digitalsolutions.ph. Their clientele is quite impressive.

But hey guys, you brought me in from the cold, even carried my clunky PC from the parking lot to your office, and gave me aid. May blessings rain down on you. I will pay your goodness forward.

Indeed, there are Good Samaritans even in the cyberhighways.

* * *

*Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph*

# Devolution of the House

**THE LONG VIEW**

*Manuel L. Quezon III*

BACK IN 1999, THEN SPEAKER MANUEL VILLAR Jr. gifted his fellow congressmen with an old book. Its title was "Rules of the House of Representatives, Commented and Annotated," by Inocencio B. Pareja. Published in 1963, it represented what, by then, was half a century of legislative practice and precedents, so thoroughly and conveniently put together that over 30 years after it was published, Villar found it useful to recommend its reading to his colleagues.

I can think of countless times the book would have come in handy, for members of the House, the media and the public, over the eight years since Villar caused the redistribution of that book. The many breathtaking examples of parliamentary ignorance, verging on political idiocy, certainly amounting to the height of institutional irresponsibility, that have come to characterize goings-on in the House, and the disorder, stubborn disregard for the rules, and obvious ignorance among the representatives that sit in it that could have been avoided, are mind-boggling. It's not that a little knowledge is a dangerous thing; it's that pride in wallowing in ignorance is such a destructive thing.

Pareja writes, "Since October 16, 1907, the Speaker has always been elected by viva voce vote. In the election, the Secretary calls the roll and records the viva voce vote cast by each Member."

A viva voce vote, incidentally, is what differentiates an elected representative and the manner in which she votes from the manner of voting of the electorate that elected her. "It is sometimes opposed to ballot; as, the people vote by ballot, but their representatives in the legislature, vote viva voce," as one legal lexicon puts it. A citizen is entitled to a secret ballot; an elected representative is never entitled to vote secretly, because a representative at all times must be held accountable for every vote cast.

In recent days, a proposal has been made by partisans of President Macapagal-Arroyo's pet party, Kampi, for the speakership to be decided not by means of a viva voce vote, but by a secret ballot. I never thought I'd be tempted to agree with the current incarnation of Edcel Lagman (you know, his pro-administration-at the-expense-of-everything-else position). But when he said, "Secrecy is the cover for turncoats," I came close to agreeing with him.

Close, but not quite. Lagman missed the point. The obnoxious thing about the Kampi secret ballot proposal is that it is a suggestion that subverts the very nature of a legislature: a place where representatives freely and openly debate, and openly vote and submit to being held accountable for each and every vote they cast. A human might as well propose to transform himself into a chimpanzee.

If that weren't bad enough, Kampi argues that anyway, each Congress determines its own rules. It's true that when the terms of all the members end, a Congress passes into history and with it go its rules. When the new members of the House are elected, they join the new half of the Senate and constitute a new Congress. On June 30, the 13th Congress passed into history; this is why, next week, the 14th Congress convenes. But the rules can only be mangled up to a point.

There is also a reason why the new Congress will call itself the 14th: it is part of a line, it is heir to a tradition, it is bound by precedent.

In 1949, Pareja pointed out that "As Presiding Officer [because, until a new House elects its new Speaker, the Secretary of the House has to preside over the process of electing the new leadership], the Secretary refused to entertain a motion to elect the Speaker by secret ballot and reaffirmed that election of the Speaker, according to the practice, has always been viva voce." Also, in 1958, "As Presiding Officer in the inaugural session of the Fourth Congress, the Acting Secretary of the House refused to entertain a motion that election of the Speaker be by secret ballot, but submitted the motion to the House for decision, which motion was lost."

Each legislature's practices is built upon those of the legislatures that preceded it; and our House must submit not only to the way previous Houses did it, but how any lawmaking body aspiring to be taken seriously does it, too, and no legislature selects its leadership by secret ballot.

This year is a special one, as far as the House is concerned. In October, it will be a century since the evolution of the present House of Representatives began. Prior to that, we'd had the Malolos Congress, but it was, to our political history, what the Neanderthals are to us: an authentic branch of development, but an evolutionary dead end. In the First Philippine Assembly of 1907, the assemblymen had a choice: to adopt the rules of the Spanish Cortes, or adopt the rules of the US House of Representatives. The assemblymen who'd served in the Malolos Congress preferred the Spanish rules; the younger members preferred the American rules. The younger generation won.

Since then, interrupted only by the first few years of the Japanese Occupation and the first six years of martial law, the House has endured, and its story represents a century of practical experience in legislative work. Kampi is resurrecting a proposal thrown out twice by previous Congresses, and for good reasons that date all the way back to 1907, when Sergio Osmeña became our first democratically-elected speaker.

In biological terms, "devolution" is the evolution of a species into more "primitive" forms. Politically, this is a process taking place before our eyes in the House of Representatives. Day by day, from upright homo sapiens, the members of the House are showing a marked preference for walking on their knuckles, preparatory to climbing back up trees, in order to live in the branches and throw feces at each other.

# Chicken soup

**YOUNG BLOOD**

*Mendelsohn Chan*

*We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.*

WHEN I WAS IN THIRD GRADE, I LEARNED TO LOVE "Chicken Soup." But if you think it is a hearty concoction that soothes the soul in times of trouble and despair, smoothes wrinkles of melancholy with its pungent aroma and warmth, I am sorry to tell you that you are mistaken. I am, of course, referring to the bestselling book, "Chicken Soup for the Soul."

I can still remember my mother, sitting beside me every night on my bed, reading a story from "Chicken Soup." Those nights are now among my most treasured memories.

I was always fascinated by how the people in those stories, especially kids like me, managed to overcome the odds and still remained happy and contented in the face of terrible tragedies.

Back then, I had it all. Both of my parents were earning huge sums of money. I was their only child and so I became a "spoiled rich kid."

Since we could easily afford it, my mom enrolled me in all the activities she could think of. Piano lessons, Kumon Math, basketball camp—name it, I joined it. So, it wasn't really very surprising that I ranked first in my batch during my first five years in elementary school.

Then, tragedy struck.

It was the 18th of February 2004. Around noon, when we were about to wind up our history class, the principal's secretary came to our classroom. She whispered something to our teacher. After what seemed like a long pause, the teacher called my name, and told me to go to the principal's office.

The whole class gasped. I was stunned. "What could I have possibly done?" I wondered.

I stood up and tried to remain calm and poised as I was escorted out of the classroom. During that one-minute walk to the principal's office, I tried to study the secretary's face. She wore a straight face, but I could have sworn that she looked as if she was feeling sorry for me.

When I entered the office, and the principal, who was seated on her black leather chair, asked me to sit down. She hesitated for a moment and then let it out, "I'm sorry, Mendelsohn, your parents died this morning."

I didn't know what to say. How I wished it was April 1 and that everything was a cruel prank.

But it wasn't. The fact was that both my parents were gone, and I was an orphan.

Things happened awfully fast after that. My aunt picked me up from school and drove me home. On the way, she told me that my parents died after their car collided head-on with a freight truck.

Until then, this painful reality had not sunk in yet. I knew that mom and dad were gone, but a part of me was not willing to accept that. I had not even flinched when the principal told me the heartbreaking news.

It wasn't until that night, when I was getting ready for bed, that I finally accepted the fact that they were not coming back.

My life pretty much went downhill from there. My grades plunged and I quickly developed into a "problem child." At first, I was failing some quizzes. Then I became disrespectful to the teacher. Next, I started skipping classes.

Everyone tried to help. Support groups, guidance counseling, spiritual counseling, I have been to every one of those. But nothing could ease, much less erase, my anger, bitterness and grief over the loss of my parents.

From that ill-fated day, I stopped reading "Chicken Soup." And it wasn't until my parents' first death anniversary that I decided to pick up that old, dusty book from the shelf again. I flipped through its pages and found myself reading a story in the "On Death and Dying" section. Call it coincidence, chance, fate or divine intervention, but I knew instantly that God somehow made me turn to that exact page and story.

The story was about a kid like me, who lost her parents during the 1995 Oklahoma bombing. Like me, the girl also became cynical and bitter at the world. But as time passed, she accepted her parents' death and soon she was drawing strength from their memory and pursuing excellence in everything she did in order to honor them.

As I read her story, I felt an inner peace that I had not felt in a long, long time. It seemed as if my parents were back there with me again that day. And until now, I feel that they still are. Constantly giving me joy and warmth, just like a bowl of chicken soup.

*Mendelsohn Chan, 15, is a high school junior at Jubilee Christian Academy in Quezon City.*

**IN THE NEWS**

**Chief Justice Reynato Puno**

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# Tall billboard near airport

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IN 1993, I WROTE A FEW NEWSPAPERS citing the construction of a three-story building at the edge of the approach to Runway 06. The decisive action of the late Capt. Panfilo Villaruel Jr. of the Air Transportation Office and Rep. Roilo Golez stopped the construction. The same decisiveness was shown by the ATO with regard to similar airport hazards (in Bacolod, Cauayan, etc.).

But here is a tall billboard at the intersection of the MIA road and Ninoy Aquino Avenue, towering over the Nayong Pilipino Caltex station fronting the ATO Office. Its location is right beside a helipad. The typhoon season is fast approaching and monsoon rains will surely impair the visibility around the area, thus a chopper accident is not farfetched. (Last year, the government moved to regulate the installation of billboards around Metro Manila. But today, they're again sprouting all over.)

Calling all concerned government agencies to act on this matter before it's too late.

**—CAPT. AGUSTIN F. JOSE,**
**Lionair Inc., afjose@yahoo.com**

## All intellectual creators entitled to protection

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A FEW CLARIFICATIONS on the news story "'Before you complain...'" (INQUIRER, 6/21/07) According to the report, I stated that "only local artists are entitled to protection." Let me stress that it is not only the local artists who are entitled to protection; all intellectual creators are protected the moment they complete their work.

This includes foreign authors who are from countries that are members of the Berne Convention (Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works) and the Rome Convention (Convention for the Protection of Performers, Producers of Phonograms and Broadcasting Organizations).

Let me also emphasize that, contrary to what was reported, certificates of copyright registration are not required for the filing by a copyright owner of a complaint of infringement. Copyright registration is only for the purpose of completing the records of the National Library; thus, with or without a certificate, a copyright owner may file a complaint of infringement.

**—VIRGINIO V. ARRIERO,**
**acting chief,**
**Publication and Special**
**Services Division, The National Library,**
**TM Kalaw Street, Ermita, Manila**

## A futile exercise unless brought to court

"NENE, BISHOP QUESTION SOLDIERS' PRESENCE." (INQUIRER, 7/12/07) This news story referred to Malacañang's plan to deploy military troops in urban communities in preparation for Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's forthcoming State of the Nation Address.

With whom or before whom was the question raised? The media? A futile exercise.

The unsettled issue on the propriety or impropriety of the presence of soldiers—not policemen—in some parts of the metropolis to maintain peace and order or combat communist activities has been in the news, like a broken record, for too long. Why can't the courts settle this issue once and for all?

Of course, it is a bit unfortunate that, under our governmental system of checks and balances, the judiciary is not the proverbial mountain that goes down to Muhammad if Muhammad cannot go up the mountain.

Well, let no one disturb the sublime passiveness of the courts. But let him, lay or clergy, who perceives any unconstitutionality in his midst, do a Muhammad by going up to the Supreme Court—rather than merely, and fruitlessly, airing his concern before newsmen.

**—RUDY L. CORONEL,**
**10 Venus St.,**
**Golden Country Homes,**
**Alangilan, Batangas City**

## More ruinous to free trade than to protectionism

PROF. SHUJIRO URATA OF WASEDA UNIVERsity is quite mistaken in his insinuation that the Filipino critics of the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa), including the very vocal environmentalists, are economic protectionists all. ("Japanese economist: RP could've gotten better Jpepa deal," INQUIRER, 7/9/07)

One need not be a protectionist to see what's wrong with a bilateral agreement like the Jpepa. In fact, a valid and powerful case against Jpepa-type bilateralism can be made from a free trade perspective. A bilateral "free trade" agreement (FTA), such as the Jpepa, is strictly speaking, really a preferential trade agreement. Although the Jpepa lowers the tariff barriers between Japan and the Philippines, it does this to the exclusion of all other countries. It is because of their inherently discriminatory nature that FTAs, like the Jpepa, far from advancing the cause of free trade in the world, actually undermine it.

Because it must necessarily include only Japan and the Philippines and exclude all outsiders, Jpepa will further clutter up trade with discriminatory focus on the nationality of goods determined by the complex rules of origin, the administration of which significantly adds to the cost of transaction. Even if a commodity's tariff has been lowered under the Jpepa, a Filipino exporter may find complying with the rules of origin too costly; so rather than take advantage of the preference for his eligible commodity, he may just choose to pay instead the pre-Jpepa, most-favored-nation (MFN) duty.

It is also often conveniently forgotten that what drove the adoption of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) was the proliferation of preferential trading arrangements not unlike the Jpepa. The World Trade Organization may turn a blind eye, but every bit of preferential trading arrangement secured by an FTA creates another crack on the non-discrimination ideal of free trade set up by the GATT.

Ultimately, the Jpepa may be more ruinous to the cause of free trade than to protectionism in this country. Once it fails to live up to the government's much-heralded and grossly hyperbolic expectations (in the unlikely event, of course, that it gets past the Senate), another armory would have been provided to the protectionists, so that when a real opportunity for free trade in the future does come, the people may be too weary of past experiences to embrace it.

**—RONNEL LIM,**
**Health Care Without Harm-Southeast Asia,**
**Unit 330 Eagle Court Condominium,**
**Matalino Street, Barangay Central, QC**

## Office of the Ombudsman rudderless under Gutierrez

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN IS IN A state of disorder. There are external and internal factors that explain it.

Externally, the net sincerity rating of the Office of the Ombudsman has decreased significantly since 2004. Its questionable decision on the Comelec-Mega Pacific deal, its dubious suspension of local government executives critical to Malacañang and its non-action on the fertilizer scam and other high-profile cases have made the public doubt if the Office of the Ombudsman still serves as an independent body and as the people's watchdog against government irregularities.

Internally, the mismanagement of and confusion in the affairs of the Office of the Ombudsman—be they "small" administrative matters (e.g., approvals and responses to communications by the Ombudsman herself take a number of months) or "big" tasks as policy implementation (e.g., alleged abolition of the Field Investigation Office, which was created by then Ombudsman Simeon Marcelo and was tasked to investigate Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia and other high-profile cases)—have never been this obvious.

It's not only the media and the public but also employees of the Office of the Ombudsman who are in a flux of uncertainty. The present leadership has never been clear on its plan of action, on what the Office of the Ombudsman wishes to accomplish for itself and for the country. Instead, there are tensions in its sub-offices. Many of its officials are fighting for power and recognition and positions. The unity built in the office during Marcelo's term is in shatters. There's too much politics in the air.

It is incorrect to blame all these problems solely on Ombudsman Merceditas Gutierrez; however, many of them can be traced to her.

And what must she do to address these problems?

Externally, Gutierrez must improve her and the Office of the Ombudsman's public image. There is a perception that the Office of the Ombudsman does not do its job although this is not true of many of its employees who do their duties faithfully.

Internally, Gutierrez must:

1. Change her attitude and leadership style. Employees and officials of the Office of the Ombudsman find her unreachable. She only relies on trusted people who may be managing information in favor of certain individuals or cliques.

2. Appoint good managers and policymakers. The Office of the Ombudsman needs more than a leader to address administrative lapses and to properly execute plans and projects.

3. Refocus strategies. Instead of concentrating the Office of the Ombudsman's manpower and resources on small-fry task forces (Task Force Red Plate, Task Force Sapak, etc.), Gutierrez should prioritize the high-profile cases and those that have piled up on her table for approval. After all, the Ombudsman Act itself stipulates that the Office of the Ombudsman should give priority to high-profile cases.

4. Resign. If Gutierrez fails to do the foregoing in the coming days, it would be nobler for her to resign instead of demoralizing and breaking up the Office of the Ombudsman.

**—ULYSSES MALAYA,**
**concerned employee of the Office**
**of the Ombudsman,**
**ulysses_malaya@yahoo.com**

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# Across the NATION

Text us your feedback: inquirer atn name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) or 283 (Smart) *Assistant Editor* **Tony Bergonia**

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# Troops say they're not ready for HSA

**By Julie S. Alipala**
*Inquirer Mindanao*

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Government soldiers and police officers still need to know more about the Human Security Act, the INQUIRER learned.

In interviews with ground troops in Basilan, the soldiers said they do not know much about it.

"*Wala talaga kaming alam diyan sa antiterror law na yan* (We really don't know anything about the antiterror law)," a corporal who refused to be identified said.

Another soldier, with a rank of private first class, said: "*Akala ko para sa kalusugan ng mamamayang Pilipino* (I thought it was for the health of the people)."

A junior Army officer said soldiers need at least a whole semester to study HSA.

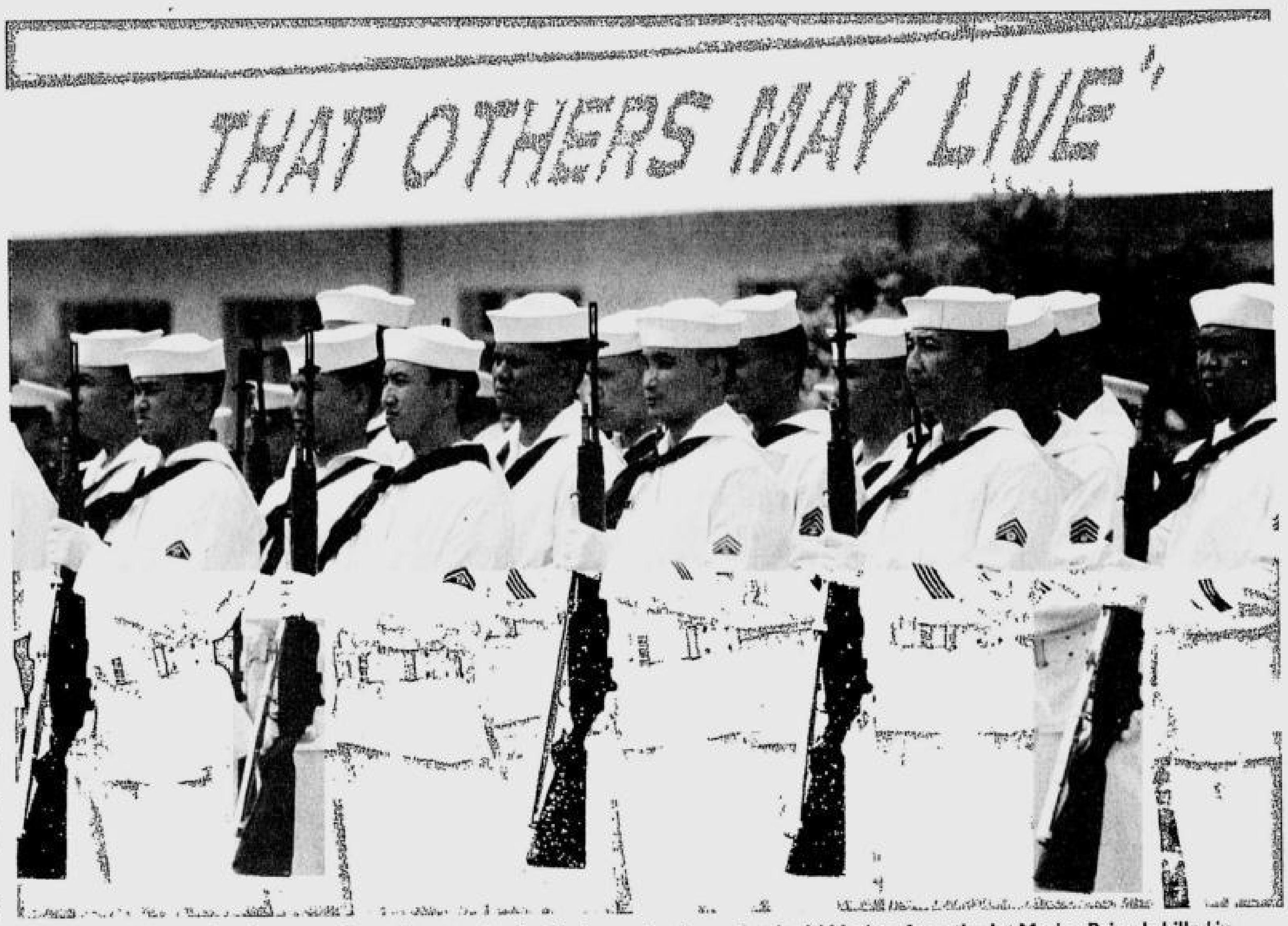
"It requires a whole semester or a whole course to study and understand this. It's not easy to implement it overnight," he said.

Maj. Gen. Nehemias Pajarito, commander of the 1st Infantry Division based in Zamboanga del Sur, admitted that even officers lacked enough knowledge on what the law is all about.

But Pajarito said they needed to be oriented about the law before it could be implemented.

"That is something that we have to do first before implementing it. We (also) need to educate and inform our soldiers about the provisions of this new law," Pajarito said.

Senior Supt. Francisco Cristobal, Zamboanga Sibugay police chief, said "much as we want to apply this law, we are not yet ready."




**PHILIPPINE** Navy enlisted personnel stand in attention for the heroes' welcome for the 14 Marines from the 1st Marine Brigade killed in Tipo-Tipo, Basilan in Villamor Airbase. LYN RILLON

"Though we have knowledge (about it) but I don't think everyone understands the provision," he said.

Cristobal said they preferred that an information drive be conducted in areas where law enforcers and police investigators are facing sensitive cases, like kidnappings.

Task Force Bossi chief Col. Jovencio Magalso said the HSA could be used in the hunt for kidnapped Italian priest Giancarlo Bossi. But he said they still need to study the provisions of the new law.

"To tell you the truth, we have not studied the Human Security Act. We really need to have some kind of orientation regarding the provisions," Magalso said.

He, however, said no one among his men will attempt to use the law "because of safety nets," referring to the P500,000 fine per day for the wrong detention of suspects.

"So what we are doing here in (Zamboanga) Sibugay, we just operate within the existing bounds of the law," Magalso said.

Armed Forces chief Gen. Hermogenes Esperon Jr. said the military really do not need the HSA to find Bossi.

He said the penal code "is available for us."

"But if there's a need (for us to use it), then why not? It's a law and (it is) existing," he said.

MILF information officer Mohaqher Iqbal, who is also the group's chief peace negotiator, said the HSA has "radically changed the legal principle of the Philippine government."

"Any person can be at the mercy of a government agent and even those innocent people are presumed guilty, compared to the old perspective where even those caught violating the law are still presumed innocent," he said.

Iqbal said the HSA has a "very chilling effect not just on people close to suspected terrorists but especially on Muslim communities." *Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

# Motorcycle riding men shoot dead Jap trader

**By Jhunnex Napallacan**
*Inquirer Visayas*

CEBU CITY—TWO MOTORCYCLE-riding men shot dead a Japanese businessman past midnight Wednesday near the house he was renting in Mandaue City.

The Mandaue City police identified the fatality as Taroh Suda, 36, single, from Tokyo, and residing at Genzon Compound in Banilad, Mandaue City.

Suda, who has been residing in Cebu since 2001, owned a Japanese restaurant in Mandaue City.

PO2 Rey Manatad, leader of a team sent to investigate by the Mandaue City Police Office Precinct 4, said Suda died instantly from gunshot wounds in the head and in other parts of the body.

Manatad said the Japanese, who was driving his car, left his restaurant and went to a fast food chain before proceeding to his house in Genzon Compound past midnight.

A witness located 20 meters from the crime scene told Manatad that Suda disembarked from his vehicle to open the gate of the compound, when two men in a motorcycle arrived.

He said the motorcycle driver shot Suda, who tried to flee from his assailants by taking cover behind his vehicle.

But the second suspect, who was wearing a bonnet, disembarked, approached the Japanese and shot him several times.

Before the suspects fled, they also shot the vehicle's tire and the rear of the vehicle and then sped off, the witness added.

Manatad said they recovered nine casings for .45-cal. pistol bullets.

Manatad said the suspects were apparently waiting for the victim.

He said police have yet to determine the motive for the killing. But he said the motive could either be a business dispute or personal grudge.

# Hunger stalks Cordillerans, say health, economic execs

BAGUIO CITY—ALTHOUGH the Cordillera is identified as an agricultural region, its residents are suffering from hunger and malnutrition, according to health officials and economists here.

Juan Ngalob, regional director of National Economic and Development Authority in the Cordillera, said even if the region was landlocked with rice and vegetable farms, many of its people suffer from hunger because of inaccessibility to food due to insurgency and bad infrastructure.

He said agricultural lands that produce rice and vegetables have limited access to provinces and villages engaged in the food trade.

Dr. Michaela Defiesta, regional coordinator of the National Nutrition Council (NNC), said the provinces identified as "food poor" are Mt. Province, Kalinga, Abra, Apayao and Ifugao.

Benguet, Cordillera's vegetable capital, was not in the list.

## Target areas

Defiesta said the "food poor" provinces are the target areas for the implementation of the government's anti-hunger mitigation program (AHMP).

"We are involving the Department of Public Works and Highway in this program because we want food to reach the people. We are also campaigning for livelihood programs," she said.

She said President Macapagal-Arroyo had asked the NNC to include non-government organizations, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the military in the program.

Dr. Amelita Pangilinan, chief of the health operations division of the Department of Health in the Cordillera, said the government does not only want to address hunger in the region but also the lack of food.

Thomas Killip, presidential assistant for Cordillera affairs, said poor infrastructure and insurgency contributed to lack of food in region. But he was bothered by the malnutrition of many people which, he said, should be the concern of all.

## Malnutrition

"There is malnutrition because of wrong kinds of food. One may have too much rice ... but he may lack vegetable in his diet," he said.

Killip said the local government should enhance the production of traditional rice, vegetable and fish varieties that are rich in nutritive values.

There are self-sufficient agricultural communities but the size of arable lands are decreasing due to increasing population, he said. *Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

# Ex-PBA player comes out, sues Francswiss men

**By Jhunnex Napallacan**
*Inquirer Visayas*

CEBU CITY—FORMER PHILIPPINE BASKETball Association (PBA) star Bonel Balingit has gone to the National Bureau of Investigation here and affirmed talks circulating in Metro Manila that he was among those who invested in Francswiss, a pyramiding scheme.

Balingit invested $3,000, or about P135,000, in Francswiss, according to NBI Central Visayas special investigator Arnel Pura.

Pura said Balingit first went to NBI last week to file a complaint but he filed an affidavit on Tuesday.

Balingit, who placed his address as Barangay Mambaling, Cebu City, identified Ely Castillo and Edwin Saldaña as the ones who convinced him to invest in Francswiss.

Pura said Balingit admitted that he invested $3,000 because he was tempted by the promise of huge returns, the 4.5 percent daily interest that was promised by his two recruiters.

According to Pura, Balingit placed his investment in Metro Manila.

Balingit hailed from Mindanao but settled in Cebu, where he spent his college years as varsity player for the Green Lancers of the University of the Visayas before he joined the PBA in the 1990s.

Pura, who urged other victims to file complaints, said the NBI was still in the process of identifying other persons who were involved in the pyramiding scheme.

LIST OF EXHIBITORS
(as of July 10, 2007)

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Ateneo de Manila University Press
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CD Books International Inc.
Creative Mind Books Center
EDCA Publishing & Dist. Corp.
F & J de Jesus, Inc.
Global Learning Media Corporation
Golden Books Services, Inc.
Goodwill Bookstore
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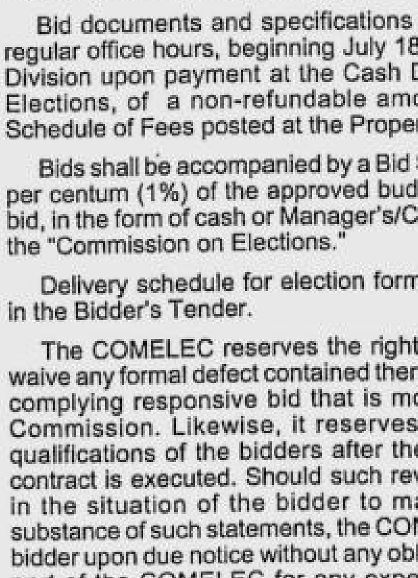


Republic of the Philippines
COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

Sealed applications for eligibility and bid documents for the supply and delivery of Election forms, supplies and computer printers for use in the October 29, 2007 Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan Elections, shall be received at the Comelec Session Hall, 8th floor, Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila, July 27, 2007 at 10:00 AM, at which place, date and time, said sealed bids shall be opened in the presence of the members of the Bids and Awards Committee, representatives of the Commission on Elections, Commission on Audit, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting, the participating bidders and the public, with an approved budget of two hundred sixty six million five hundred seventy thousand six hundred twenty six pesos & 24/200 (P266,570,626.24) chargeable against the Synchronized SK and Barangay Elections 2007 Appropriation and savings of Preparatory National and Local Elections fund.

A pre-bid conference shall be held on July 23, 2007 at 10:00 AM, at the Comelec Session Hall, 8th floor, Palacio del Gobernador, Intramuros, Manila.

Bid documents and specifications may be obtained during regular office hours, beginning July 18, 2007 from the Property Division upon payment at the Cash Division, Commission on Elections, of a non-refundable amount as indicated in the Schedule of Fees posted at the Property Division.

Bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security equivalent to one per centum (1%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid, in the form of cash or Manager's/Cashier's check payable to the "Commission on Elections."

Delivery schedule for election forms, supplies are indicated in the Bidder's Tender.

The COMELEC reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any formal defect contained therein, and accept the lowest complying responsive bid that is most advantageous to the Commission. Likewise, it reserves the right to review the qualifications of the bidders after the bidding and before the contract is executed. Should such review uncover any change in the situation of the bidder to materially downgrade the substance of such statements, the COMELEC shall disqualify the bidder upon due notice without any obligation whatsoever on the part of the COMELEC for any expense or loss that may be incurred by the bidder in the preparation of its bid.

July 16, 2007.

(Sgd.) JOSE M. TOLENTINO, JR.
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–July 19, 2007)

# Inauguration of the New Container Terminal-I

## Subic Bay Port Development Project

**19 July 2007**

by

**HER EXCELLENCY GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO**

President, Republic of the Philippines

## MESSAGE

Congratulations to the men and women of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) as you open the Subic Bay Freeport's New Container Terminal 1, moving us closer to our vision of making the Subic Bay Freeport the regional shipping hub of the Asia-Pacific region.

Subic Bay has built-in advantages over other ports in the region because of its close proximity to China, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, and other Asian countries, its natural deep harbor with excellent support facilities, its low tariff rates, and state-of-the-art safety, navigational and communications systems. Adding to these competitive advantages are Subic Bay's airport, seaport and industrial-techno parks which are integrated into its infrastructure base.

Indeed, with this project, we stay on course in developing Subic, along with Clark, into the most competitive international service and logistics center in Southeast Asia.

Again, my warmest congratulations to the men and women of SBMA on the opening of this new container terminal. Keep up the good work!

*Mabuhay tayong lahat!*

Gloria Arroyo

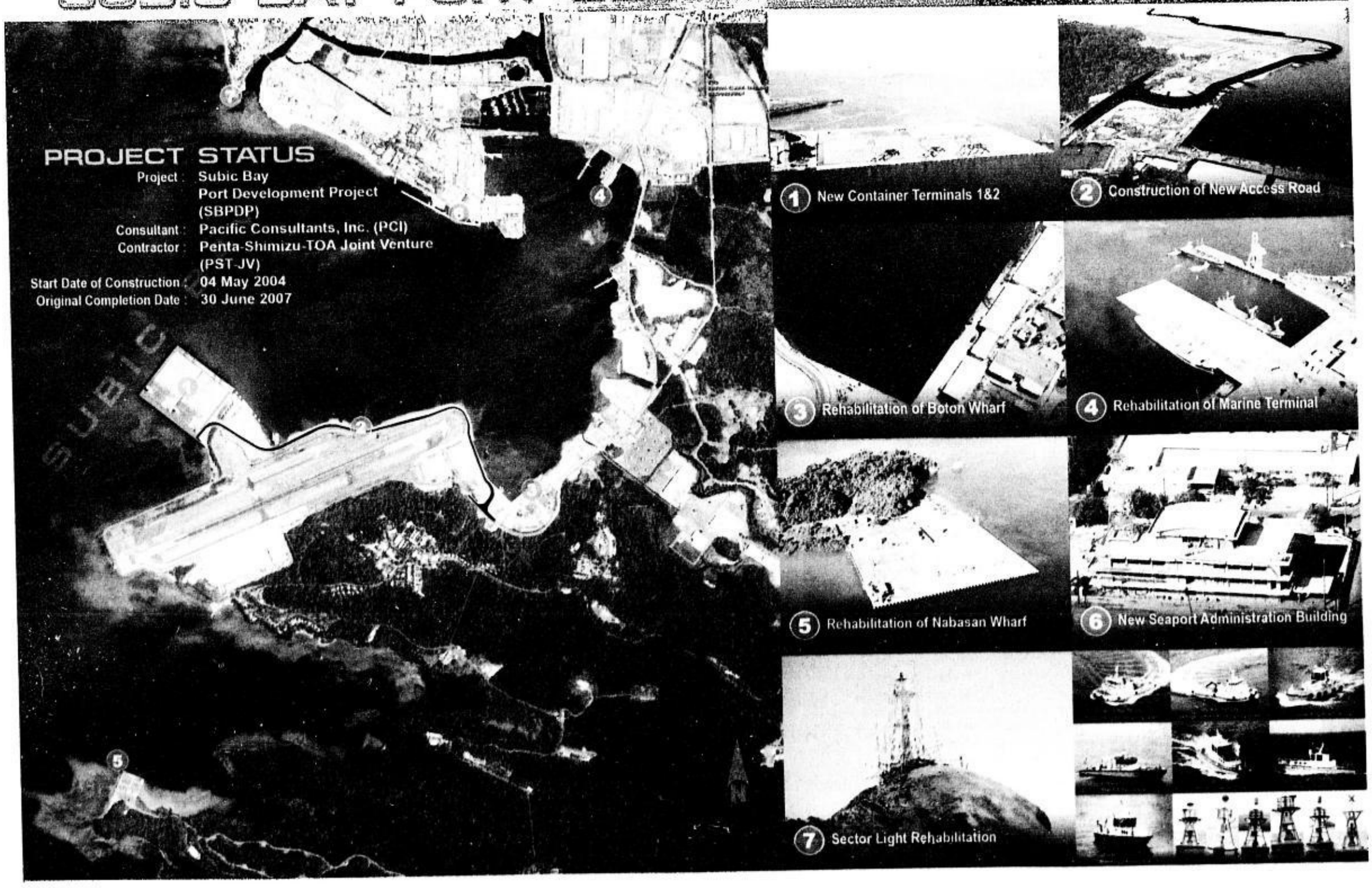
GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO

"The Subic-Clark corridor will be the most competitive international service & logistics center in the Southeast Asian Region."

SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY

Subic Bay International Terminal Corporation
An ICTSI Group Company

## SUBIC BAY PORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECT




SUBIC BAY METROPOLITAN AUTHORITY

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INQUIRER *Southern Luzon*

*Editor* **Jun Bandayrel**
*Bureau Chief* **Floreño G. Solmirano**

# Organic farmers plant seeds of character, too

**By Madonna T. Virola**
*Naic, Cavite*

PEOPLE SAID NESTOR Cosilit was out of his mind when in 1998, coming from Isabela province, he started clearing a 3,500-square-meter cogon-covered land in Naic, Cavite, just with the use of a hoe and rainwater.

"They could not believe that it could be a productive vegetable garden," said Nestor, 53, who uses animal manure as fertilizer.

Instead of him paying the Montoya family, owner of the land, for land rental, it gives Nestor P1,500 monthly allowance and does not get any share from his produce.

"Maybe because they appreciate what I've done for their land," he said as he sat on a wooden chair across the garden while sipping organic coffee.

People come to Nestor's garden, which has become like a fresh market, and buy chicharo, soya, stringbeans, cowpea, cauliflower, carrots, Baguio beans, tomatoes, eggplants, pepper and squash, among other vegetables.

"The vegetables have a different taste. The lettuce is juicy and sweet," said Rina Corpuz, a University of the Philippines instructor and a vegetarian.

THE SAMAHAN ng Magsasaka sa Kapuluan (Samasaka) has been giving hands-on training on organic farming to out-of-school youths like Gerry Macabuhay and Jeff Ascan (with cap), both 19, of Trece Martires City. MADONNA VIROLA

## Healthy life

Nestor said he preferred his quiet and healthy life in a small house now than while he was earning money in the Middle East where he worked as an electrician for seven years.

During rest time, his family takes delight in watching their garden because they don't have a television set.

His children Rachell Ann, 12, and Jhonnelcin, 8, are proud of him.

"None among my classmates' fathers can do what my father does. I'm even better than the boys in cleaning the garden using a hoe," Rachell Ann said.

She sells their excess vegetable produce to her teachers and neighbors. She tells them, "my father's vegetables are organic, no chemical."

## Samasaka

Nestor helped Rachell's school win in an interschool garden competition where he recycled plastic containers, given the limited garden space.

He is one of the 2,000 farmer-members of Samahan ng Magsasaka sa Kapuluan (Samasaka), which started training them in 2002. Their members come from Cavite, Laguna, Palawan and Bohol.

About 20 members have become pure organic farmers and have trained others, including nongovernment organizations like the World Vision. Nestor alone supervises about 20 farmers on a voluntary basis.

His organizer, Bernie Aragoza, consultant on sustainable agriculture to the provincial government, shared their slogan that connects organic farming and good character with development. It calls for the return of values like self-help, perseverance, and good-heartedness.

Since last year, Samasaka has extended its services to out-of-school youth. Six of them have completed the hands-on training in organic farming.

## Formation

"We were war-freak before—idle, vicious—our parents' and the barangay's headache," said Gerry Macabuhay and Jeff Ascan, both 19, of Trece Martires City.

A trainee is taught values like self-respect, hard work and patience.

Each trainee receives P2,000 monthly allowance. Graduates are assisted in job placement, and if there is no job yet, work on idle lands until they find a job.

Samasaka members wish to stay together in a one-hectare community settlement where they can live a lifestyle that is not only farm-conscious but also social and eco-conscious.

The group's policy is "Even if you don't have land, plant wherever you are whatever can be planted."

"We want squatters to see this and be inspired to return to their provinces," said Aragoza.

Aragoza said Nestor and his family, has recently been asked by mediaman Ramon Tulfo to manage his farm in Palawan.

Cosilit gets help for the education of his children, free rice supply and 40 percent of the produce, aside from the pay he gets managing the farm, said Aragoza. Nestor returned the Montoya family's land back to them.

For transforming the lives of its members, Samasaka was given a citation in Araneta Coliseum in Cubao, Quezon City, on June 19 during a concert organized by the Brahma Kumaris Spiritual University, an international nongovernment organization with consultative status with the United Nations and recipient of seven peace messenger awards.

# Ranch gives new hope to drug dependents

**By Ephraim Aguilar**
*Milagros, Masbate*

THEY HAD BEEN SEARCHING FOR HEALING everywhere, some having spent much money, only to find the peace they had been looking for at Fazenda da Esparança (Bukid ng Pag-asa), a ranch that offers a special way to help drug dependents.

Combining farm work with spiritual activities, the center at Bangad village in Milagros town, Masbate province seeks to enlighten drug dependents willing to be healed.

Here, there are no psychiatrists and psychologists and the "boys" are never treated as "patients."

Fazenda-Philippines director Roland Mühlig, a 28-year-old German volunteer, said the center runs under three core principles: spiritual life, work ethics, and community life.

He said the "boys" are given work in the farm, and taught perseverance, discipline, and unity. They maintain a rice field, a dairy farm, a vegetable garden, and a small bakery eight hours daily.

The Fazenda is the only supplier of fresh milk and the only source of lettuce in the whole of Masbate. It is also known for its cassava cake, cookies, and flavored milk.

The boys at the Fazenda are now also into bee-keeping and T-shirt-printing.

The revenues from 'the boys' ranch work sustain the center, which offers free rehabilitation.

Roland said the experience at the Fazenda is important to the boys as it makes them realize they are also capable of doing something productive, that they can sustain themselves.

"Most of them, when they were still outside, were idle or got involved in stealing," Roland said in Filipino. "Here, discovering that they can do it, their fruitfulness helps restore their dignity."

## Changed person

Christopher Chan, 34, who has finished the Fazenda program in February this year, said aside from the free service, he "liked the idea that you work here for your own keep."

Having stayed previously in a government-run rehabilitation center, Christopher said there are no other centers like the Fazenda where there is a family atmosphere among the "boys" and the "volunteers."

"We would watch movies on Friday and Saturday nights. Where else can you find a center like this, where sometimes, we go to the beach and island-hop?" Christopher said.

But above all, he added, what he cherished most was having been taught how to meditate and live the Gospel daily. "We were not automatically good and kind people the moment we entered the Fazenda premises. The constant challenge was for our lives to be gradually transformed," he said.

He added that the Fazenda life taught them to pray first thing every day. They were also taught how to love and live with the people around them.

Christopher said, even now that he is back to his life in Manila, he continues to live the lifestyle he had learned at the Fazenda.

## Normal people

Roland, who started as a volunteer for the Fazenda in Germany when he was 19 years old, said they only accept "boys" who are willing to undergo the rehabilitation program.

"Here you can see that our gates are just left open. We have fences but they were built for cows and not (to restrain) humans," Roland said in Filipino.

"For as long as the boy is not willing, even if you detain him for months, he will not change," Roland said.

He lamented that some rehabilitation centers simply focus on educating their patients that drug abuse is wrong.

"They do not really provide an alternative (lifestyle) for the boys," Roland said.

Settled on a 352-hectare land donated by Fr. Pierino's Mary Immaculate Development Foundation Inc., the center was built through donations.

*(For inquiries, call Roland at mobile phone number 09155014041 or e-mail at roland@fazenda.de)*

**Philippine Economic Zone Authority**
Bataan Economic Zone, Mariveles, Bataan
Telephone (6347) 935-4004; 561-2451 • Fax (6347) 935-6046

**INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID**

1. The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY – BATAAN ECONOMIC ZONE (PEZA-BEZ), through its Corporate Budget for the CY 2007 intends to apply the sum of (1) Php 5,585,145.62 and (2) Php 4,073,398.30 being the **Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)** to payments under the contract for the **(1) BEZ Grounds and Facilities Maintenance and (2) Operations and Maintenance of BEZ Waterworks and Sewerage Collection System for the Bataan Economic Zone**, respectively, located at BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid Opening.
2. The PEZA-BEZ now invites sealed Bids from Eligible Bidders for the above mentioned contracts as described below:

Brief Description : Supply of Labor, Equipment and Supervision
1. BEZ Grounds and Facilities Maintenance

| No. of Personnel/Workers | Contract Duration | Delivery Period |
|---|---|---|
| Thirty Eight (38) | One (1) calendar yr. | within 15 calendar days after Notice to Proceed |

2. Operation and Maintenance of BEZ Waterworks & Sewerage Collection System

| No. of Personnel/Workers | Contract Duration | Delivery Period |
|---|---|---|
| Twenty five (25) | One (1) calendar yr. | within 15 calendar days after Notice to Proceed |

The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **INSTRUCTION TO BIDDERS (ITB)**.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act", and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, or to citizens of or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from PEZA-BEZ and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from July 28 to August 03, 2007, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., from the address below upon submission of a **Letter of Intent (LOI)** and a certified copy of their **G-EPS Registration Certificate** and **BIR e-FPS enrollment certificate** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of Five Thousand Pesos only (Php5,000.00) for Project #1 and two thousand pesos only (P2,000.00) for Project #2. The method of payment will be on a **cash basis** only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA-BEZ will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **August 10, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the Audio-Visual Room, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or **before 1:30 P.M. of August 24, 2007**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable Letter of Credit in the amount of not less than: (1) Php 55,851.45 (2) Php 40,733.98, Bank Guarantee in the amount of not less than. (1) Php 83,777.17, (2) Php 61,100.97; or in the form of Surety Bond in the amount of not less than: (1) Php 139,628.62 (2) Php 101,834.95.
8. Bid opening shall be on **August 24, 2007** at **2:00 P.M.** at the Audio-Visual Room, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA-BEZ reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority-BEZ
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
EMD Office, Ground Floor, BEZ
Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan
Tel. No. (047) 935-4008 / Fax No. (047) 935-6046
E-mail: bez_bac1@yahoo.com
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

(Sgd.) DIONISIO T. SAMEN
BEZ-BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) DANTE M. QUINDOZA
Zone Administrator

(PDI–July 19 & 26, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT**
**National Capital Region**
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

**NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)**

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

| Name and address of Company/Employer | Name of Foreign National | Positions |
|---|---|---|
| MPL INTERNATIONAL CORPORATION, 2/F Victoria Bldg., 429 U.N. Ave., Ermita, Manila | Sun Ah Kim | Director |
| TRANSNATIONAL UYENO MARITIME INCORPORATED, G/F Harbor Center Bldg.I, A.C. Delgado cor. 23rd & 24th Sts., Port Area, Manila | Yohei Ohta | Consultant for Chartering and Operation |
| PHIL-KYOYOOK NARA INC., 113 Goldloop Tower B, Escriba Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City | Dong Wan Heo | General Manager |
| SANKI ENGINEERING COMPANY LTD., 10/F GMA Lou-Bel Plaza, Bagtikan St. cor. Chino Roces Ave., San Antonio Vill., Makati City | Hirofumi Monnai | General Manager |
| SAENG MYEONG SARANG ACUPUNCTURE'S CLINIC CORP., 156 Anthorium St., Garden Royale Vill., Pasig City | Jae O Jeon | Chairman |
| HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILS. INC., 53/F PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave., Makati City | Weiqing Lin | Product Manager |
| KATOK MAGIC CAR REPAIR, INC., 213 Dona Soledad Extension, Better Living Subd., Parañaque City | Mastur | Technical Consultant |
| NK INTERNATIONAL CO. LTD, Unit 908 Orient Square Bldg., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City | Sangwoo Kim | Assistant Administrative Manager |
| FITNESS FIRST PHILIPPINES INC., 26/F Citibank Tower, Valero cor. Villar Sts., Makati City | Richard Gordon Lakin | Acting Club Consultant |
| DREAMPHILKO INC., Unit A 2/F Evangelista Bldg., 225 Aguirre Ave., BF Homos, Parañaque City | Heajoung Seo | Chairman of the Board/President |
| WOODS GLOBE EDU CORP., Silicon cor. Marbles Rd., Pilar Village, Las Pinas City | Chang Hoon Shin | Manager |
| IELTSHELP LANGUAGE CENTER INC., Unit 1003 10/F Pacific Center, San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City | Jaeho Lee | Director/VP & Head, Administrator |
| GREENPASTURE TRAVEL & SERVICES INC., Unit 204 Don Antonio Sports Center Annex Bldg., Holy Spirit, Quezon City | Mi Sok Hong (w/o Kim) | Marketing Manager |
| JABEZ INT'L. EDUCATIONAL CENTER INC., 4/F SJG Rockwell Drive, Kalayaan cor. Don Pedro St., Makati City | Eun Young Jang (w/o Kang) | General Manager |
| MANILA SEOUL WEEKLY INTERNATIONAL INCORPORATED, 1501 The Centerpoint Bldg., Dona Julia Vargas Ave. cor. Garnet St., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City | Dong-Eun Lee | Reporter |
| VERSAILLES CORPORATION, 1607 J. Bocobo St., Ermita, Manila | Myungsoo Park | General Manager |
| MARCON PHILS. INTL. MANPOWER SERVICES INC., Suite No. 31, G/F Midland Plaza Hotel, M. Adriatico St., Ermita, Manila | Ahmed Abdullah E Alkhaldi | Overseas Marketing Director |
| YINLAND RESOURCES INC., 12 Cessna St., Concorde Village, International Airport Rd., Tambo, Parañaque City | Zhe Ma | General Manager |
| YINLAND RESOURCES INC., 12 Cessna St., Concorde Village, International Airport Rd., Tambo, Parañaque City | Wenzhuang Fan | President |
| COPY PRNT PLUS INC., 101 Kalayaan Ave., Diliman, Quezon City | Duk Hee Hong | Operation Manager |

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

ISABEL G. PANGANIBAN-ORTIGUERRA
Acting Regional Director

**The DOLE conducts free seminar on Labor-Human Relations and Productivity. For more information, please call 339-2013 & 303-5920.**

(PDI – July 19, 2007)

Late SPORTS

# Aces drag Phone Pals to a Game 7

**GAME TOMORROW (*Cuneta Astrodome*)**
7 p.m.—Alaska vs Talk 'N Text

By Musong R. Castillo

**THE WAY TIM CONE TALKED HARDLY DEscribed the enormity of what his Alaska squad just did last night.**

"All we did was force a Game 7, we haven't accomplished anything yet," Cone said, somber in tone despite coaching one of the best games in a championship series that resulted in a 121-110 bombardment by Alaska of Talk 'N Text and a rubber match in their Fiesta Cup title series.

The "real" Willie Miller showed up before a huge Araneta Coliseum crowd, shooting a career-high 37 points as Alaska erased a 12-point first quarter deficit with one of the greatest blasts in a title series.

Alaska opened up the second period with a 22-0 run, easily overhauling a 22-34 deficit to lead by twin digits and eventually tie the series at three games each and necessitate a decider tomorrow at the Cuneta Astrodome.

That spurt now stands as the second longest all-time after a 32-0 run engineered by Ginebra San Miguel in Game 5 of the 1991 First Conference Finals opposite Shell. It was in that series where the Gins came back from 1-3 down in the best-of-seven series to win.

After shooting just six points in 33 minutes of a 107-104 Game 5 loss, Miller scored in twin digits in each of the first three quarters, boosting the Aces to commanding leads before being reined in somewhat by Cone early in the fourth.

"People said a lot of things about him (after Game 5), myself included," Cone said of his 6-foot guard, who earned his second PBA Most Valuable Player award before Game 4. "He was just awesome tonight. That's the mark of a true superstar."

The Phone Pals, who will go into Game 7 never winning such a game in two tries, were held scoreless for the first 6:24 of the second quarter and were without a field goal until the final 1:56 of the period.

Talk 'N Text, which lost those two Game 7s after opening up 3-2 leads over Shell in the 1998 Governors Cup series and over Red Bull in the 2002 Commissioner's Cup, missed its first 10 shots of the second quarter while committing five errors.

**The scores:**

**ALASKA 121**—Miller 37, Ellis 22, Hugnatan 20, Belasco 14, Cortez 9, Thoss 8, Ferriols 8, Laure 2, Bajar 1, Aban 0.

**TALK 'N TEXT 110**—Cardona 29, Sullinger 24, Billones 21, Washington 14, Belano 7, Carey 6, Allado 5, Santos 2, De Ocampo 2, Fran 0, Noble 0.

**Quarters:** 22-34, 56-45, 94-76, 121-110

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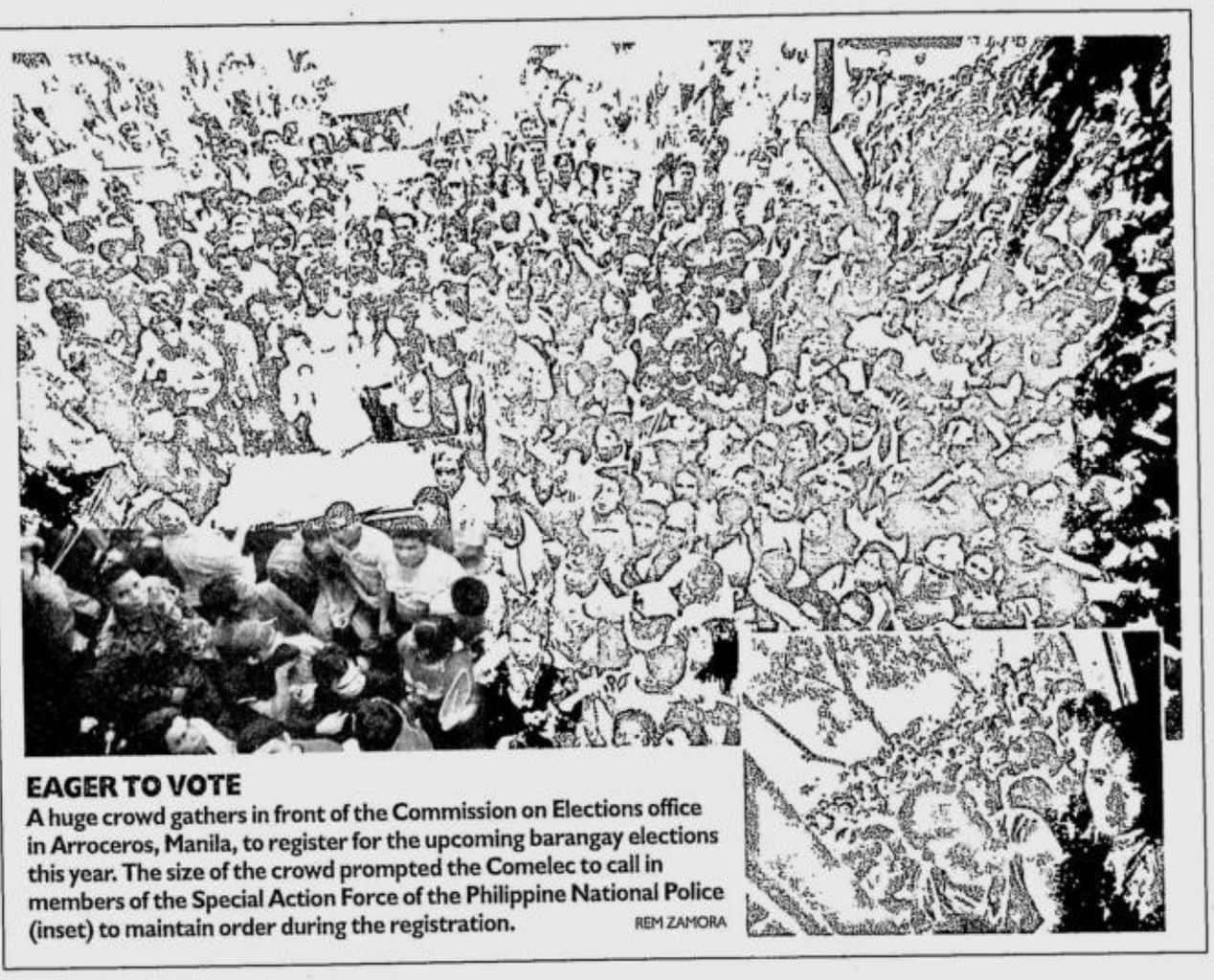
# BFAD tests include food, cosmetic items

## Toothpaste in new list of 861 suspected tainted products from China



**EAGER TO VOTE**
A huge crowd gathers in front of the Commission on Elections office in Arroceros, Manila, to register for the upcoming barangay elections this year. The size of the crowd prompted the Comelec to call in members of the Special Action Force of the Philippine National Police (inset) to maintain order during the registration. REM ZAMORA

**By Jeannette I. Andrade**

THE BUREAU OF FOOD AND DRUG (BFAD) has started testing more products from China after several brands of candy and cookies were found positive for formaldehyde, a disinfectant linked to cancer in humans.

BFAD Deputy Director Joshua Ramos yesterday said that they were examining 861 products, including cosmetics and toothpaste.

He told the INQUIRER that initial tests showed traces of a cooling agent in a toothpaste which came from China.

According to Ramos, the toxicity of food products or cosmetics could cause chronic or acute poisoning, depending on how much of the product was ingested by the victim.

Ramos, however, said that it would take some time before they finish the tests because of the number of products that have to be examined.

He added that the items to be tested do not include unregistered imported products.

"We have to test and analyze all 861 products until we are furnished a copy of the list of suspected tainted products from China," Ramos said, "There are still many unregistered Chinese products on the market and we also have to test those."

He disclosed that they are also coordinating with the Bureau of Customs to prevent the importation of Chinese products found to be contaminated with formaldehyde.

"This has to be an inter-agency undertaking. We have to make the appropriate coordination with concerned agencies to prevent the further distribution of the contaminated products," he stressed.

On Tuesday, the BFAD issued an advisory which warned the public against eating four contaminated Chinese food products: White Rabbit Cream Candy, manufactured by Shanghai Guan Sheng Yan Food General Factory; Milk Candy, manufactured by Romanticfish Food Industry Company Inc. in Fujian; Bairong Grape Biscuits, manufactured by Dongguan Bairong Foodstuff Company Ltd.; and Yong Kang Foods Grape Biscuits, manufactured by Dongguan Yongkang Food Company Ltd.

The bureau also urged distributors and vendors to withdraw the products from the market "until such time that there are evidence that the safety of the goods is assured and that the same are fit for human consumption."

Major supermarkets and malls have 15 to 30 days to remove the contaminated items, Ramos said.

Several countries have cracked down on Chinese products since the US Food and Drug Administration found out in April that North American dogs and cats had been poisoned by tainted Chinese pet food ingredients.

Since then, a growing number of Chinese products have been found to contain potentially toxic chemicals and other adulterants.

*With AP wire report*

# Railway residents given three months to relocate to sites for new homes

**By Julie M. Aurelio**

PEOPLE LIVING ALONGSIDE THE TRACKS of the Philippine National Railway in Parañaque City have been given three more months to move out of the area in order to give way to the modernization of the South Luzon Railway.

Parañaque Mayor Florencio Bernabe Jr. said a survey is being conducted among residents in the area on their preferred relocation sites as the PNR proceeds with its clearing operations.

"The informal settlers near the rail tracks in Barangay San Martin de Porres have expressed their desire to be relocated to San Pedro in Laguna as it would keep them close to their places of work," the mayor said.

Under the guidelines set by the Community Mortgage Program, the city government is in charge of checking the legitimacy of the residents' claims to the land and finding the most suitable relocation area for them.

Bernabe, meanwhile, expressed concern over the concrete commercial structures some residents have built along the railway tracks.

"Some residents said they are sitting partly on PNR property and partly on private property," the mayor said.

### Fears

These residents have expressed fear over the possibility that their business establishments would be demolished without due compensation," Bernabe added.

In a recent visit to Barangay San Martin de Porres, Vice President Noli de Castro gave the city government and the settlers until October to leave the area.

"The clearing operation and relocation of the settlers should be completed within three months," De Castro said while commending the city government for ensuring the settlers' orderly transfer to relocation areas.

### Modernization

Part of the modernization of the South Luzon Railway includes four railroad tracks which would be placed 15 meters apart from each other, the vice president added.

However, De Castro was opposed to San Pedro, Laguna, as a relocation area because it was near an open dump and would put the health of the 1,650 families at risk.

Instead, the vice president offered Biñan, Laguna or Trece Martires City, Cavite where ready-for-occupancy houses and 100 to 125-sq m lots were available for the settlers.

De Castro said the houses already have running water and electricity, and that the settlers would pay only a monthly rate of P200 for their new homes.

### DID YOU KNOW

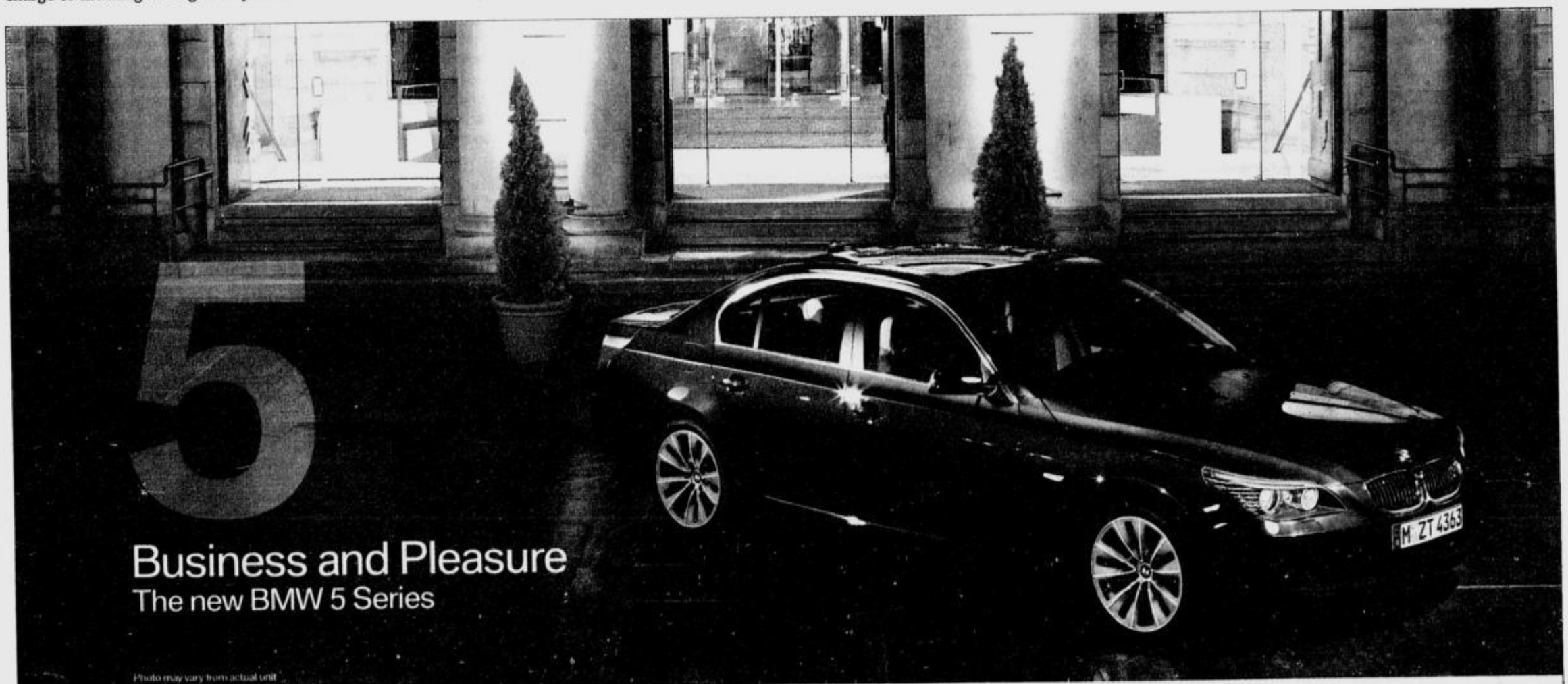
THE ASIAN Institute of Management in Makati City, one of the leading business and management schools in Southeast Asia, was the brainchild of Washington SyCip, founder of the auditing and consulting company SGV Group; Ramon del Rosario Sr., founder of the Phinma Group; and Stephen Fuller of the Harvard Business School.

The development of a full-time Master of Business Administration program was financed in the 1960s by the Ford Foundation. In 1969, classes began at the Ateneo business school in Padre Faura, Manila. The classes were relocated to the new campus in Makati the following year.

In 1995, the AIM received the Ramon Magsaysay Award for International Understanding for setting regionwide standards for excellence.

*Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research*

**Looking for Project Funding?**
**Join the *WINNING GRANT PROPOSAL WRITING SEMINAR*, July 25, 2007, Richville Hotel, 286 EDSA, Mandaluyong City, 8am-5pm.** Topics: Overview of Logical Framework Approach; Techniques, trends & best practices; Preparing solid budgets; Know where to source project funding, technical assistance & in-kind donation; Project sustainability; Strategies in crafting winning proposals. Speakers: Pilipinas Shell Foundation; Kalinga Day Care; Tritium Knowledge Center Publishing (TKCP). Get group discount. To register, call TKCP: 531-0084, 578-9833, 0919-229-9777; 0919-229-9780; 0915-780-4379 or email: tritium@pldtdsl.net or tkcp_ph@yahoo.com. Limited seats only. Register Now!

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# Trader charged with murder for stepdaughter's death

By Allison W. Lopez

A JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN accused of mauling to death his 4-year-old stepdaughter earlier this month was charged with murder yesterday at the Manila Regional Trial Court.

Shiozawa Toshiyuki, 39, of Legaspi Tower on Vito Cruz, Manila, was arrested after he allegedly killed Kate Julia Dua, the daughter of his Filipino live-in partner Harrold Dua.

Harrold said in her affidavit that the suspect, who was left alone with her child on July 7, told her that Kate fell head first on the stairs.

She said she decided to take Kate to the Manila Doctors Hospital the next day after the girl vomited intermittently.

Kate was pronounced dead by the doctor more than an hour later.

The victim's mother also said that Toshiyuki often hit her daughter, using his hand, a belt or a stick.

According to Manila homicide police head, Chief Insp. Alex Yanquiling, the suspect told the police that he only wanted to discipline Kate because they were relocating to Japan.

An examination revealed that the 4-year-old sustained bruises, bumps, cuts and scratches all over her body.

Assistant City Prosecutor Ferrer Co said Toshiyuki used his superior strength to "attack, assault and use personal violence" on his young stepdaughter.

# Kids learn ABCs, find hope in Parañaque school

By Julie M. Aurelio

INSIDE TWO CRAMPED CLASSrooms in a depressed area at the Multinational Village in Parañaque City, We Carbinilla teaches 78 preschool children from indigent families not only the alphabet but about hope.

"*Api yung tingin nila sa sarili nila* (They feel oppressed)," Carbinilla said as she patted the head of two of her wards—Annie, 6, and Christian, 5.

Though she admitted she still has a long way to go toward making her students feel better about themselves, their school environment, at least, would soon be more comfortable.

By next year, her class would be moving into a brand new building.

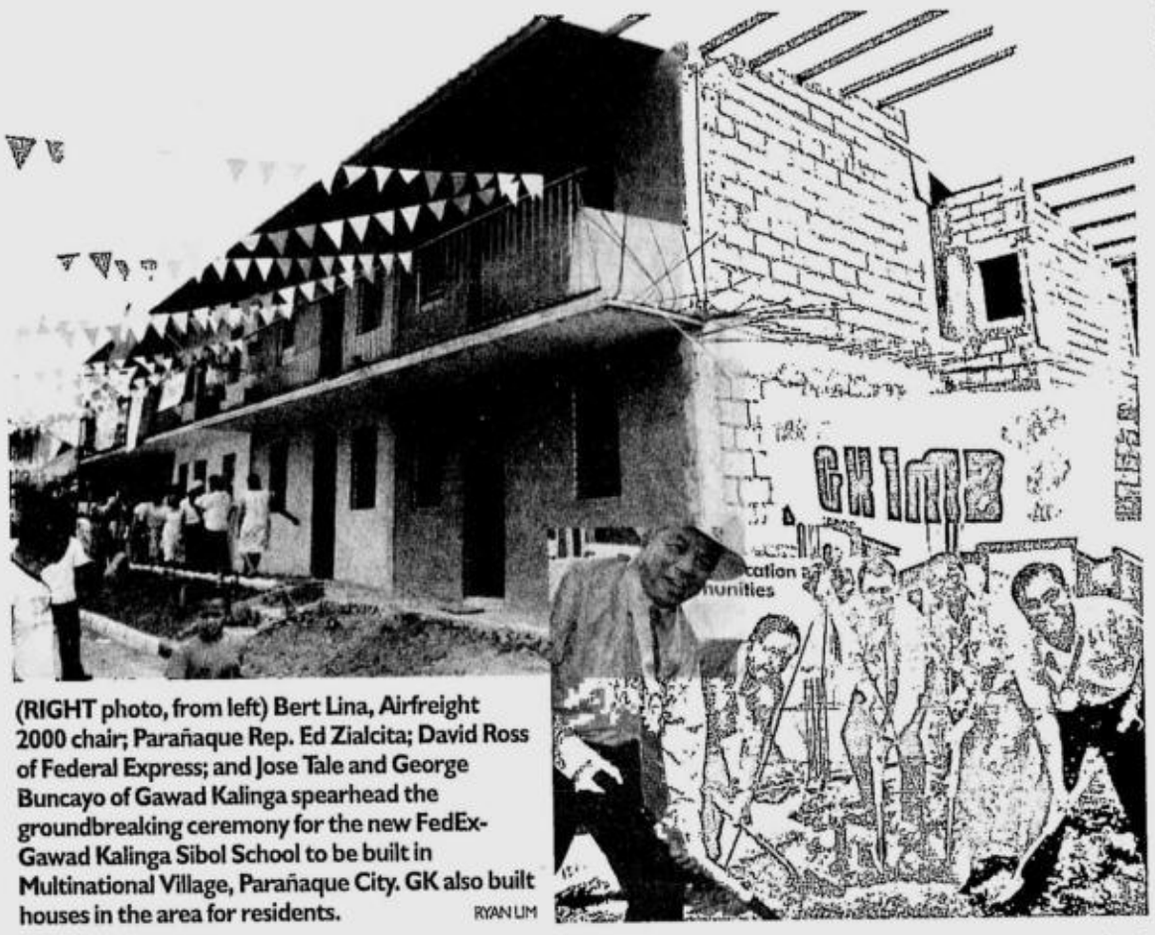
The structure, the second in the city to be sponsored by Gawad Kalinga, is expected to be finished in February.

Volunteers from GK and Federal Express, a delivery company, will construct the "FedEx-Gawad Kalinga Sibol School" with the help of residents from the community.

"This is more than providing the funds for the building. It's giving the kids a chance to boost their self-esteem and allow them to show their worth," said David Ross, regional vice president of FedEx South Pacific.

FedEx provided funds for the construction of two GK classrooms last year. Last month, another Sibol school was inaugurated in Barangay Merville.

More than 50 kids attended the groundbreaking ceremony earlier this month for the new school building in Multinational Village.



(RIGHT photo, from left) Bert Lina, Airfreight 2000 chair; Parañaque Rep. Ed Zialcita; David Ross of Federal Express; and Jose Tale and George Buncayo of Gawad Kalinga spearhead the groundbreaking ceremony for the new FedEx-Gawad Kalinga Sibol School to be built in Multinational Village, Parañaque City. GK also built houses in the area for residents. RYAN LIM

"*Masaya po kami*. (We are happy)," said Annie shyly.

She told the INQUIRER she wants to become a nurse and work abroad.

Christian, on the other hand, wants to work abroad as a doctor. His father is a Parañaque City policeman while his mom is a housewife.

FedEx will shoulder the salaries of the two preschool teachers in the new school for two years.

Ross declined to say how much his company has provided in funding to GK saying, "It's not just giving the money or the building. It's giving the children a future, the chance to hope and to dream for these kids who didn't have a head start in learning."

GK chair Jose Tale said other Sibol Schools have already opened in Sultan Kudarat and Bacolod City. Others are being constructed in Subic, Quezon City and Napa, Parañaque City.

Ross called on other multinational companies to get involved in humanitarian projects like GK's initiatives.

"We would like to see them give something, whatever they can afford, and not ask what's in it for them," he said.

He jokingly added that he would not be too surprised if some of the kids from the GK site would end up working for FedEx in 20 years or so.

"They're a bit too young at the moment, but in 22 years, perhaps ..." Ross said with a laugh.

# Taguig City, Singapore firm tie up for transport, livelihood projects

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE CITY GOVERNMENT OF Taguig has partnered with a Singapore-based company to study a proposal for building a transport terminal linking the city to various modes of transportation in Metro Manila, as well as provide livelihood opportunities to residents.

Mayor Freddie Tinga announced the tie-up with High Desert Inc. (HDI) as he hailed the importance of the private sector's efforts in improving the lives of residents.

"We are thankful that our partners from the private sector, such as HDI, are beginning to take part in improving the quality of life here in Taguig. We also encourage our constituents to participate in these worthwhile programs that will ultimately benefit them," the mayor said.

HDI, a known producer of food supplements and vitamins, agreed to conduct a feasibility study for the "intermodal terminal" dubbed the Future Trans project. Tinga said the project seeks to establish Taguig as a "true gateway to the Philippines."

Under HDI's agreement with the city government, 10 store kiosks for residents were turned over to the city. The stalls are located near Gate 3 of the Department of Science and Technology compound in Lower Bicutan.

"I thank HDI for agreeing to undertake projects that will provide livelihood opportunities to the city's residents," Tinga said.

The HDI, led by its chair Peter Chia, is constructing 10 more kiosks in other areas in Taguig City.

"We expect that HDI group's active participation in the building of the city will be instrumental in changing the way people look at Taguig," Tinga said.

"By working collectively, Taguig will become the premier city in the country and probably one of the premier cities in Asia," the mayor added.

# Rizal Avenue old-timers welcome reopening

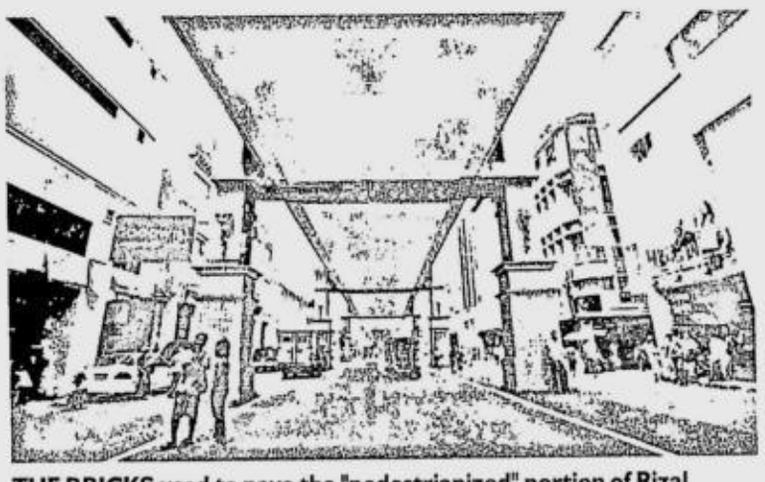
By Allison W. Lopez

RIZAL AVENUE IN MANILA'S storied Sta. Cruz district is back in the (business) groove, according to longtime patrons and loyal shopkeepers who have stayed put.

Drivers gunning the engine of their vehicles, the footsteps of pedestrians and vendors calling out to passersby—all these may seem like noise to other people but to those who were affected most by the closure of a portion of the national road in 2003, it's all music to their ears.

"Feel *mo na ang* Manila *ulit* (You can feel Manila again)," said Lilia Velasquez, supervisor of the Fair Mart department store, of the return of jeepneys to the former "pedestrianized" portion of Rizal Avenue from the corner of Recto to Carriedo.

After more than four years of being closed to vehicular traffic, Avenida was finally reopened to motorists on Saturday after personnel from the City Engineer's Office, upon orders of Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, finished removing the bricks that paved the pedestrianized area.



THE BRICKS used to pave the "pedestrianized" portion of Rizal Avenue in Sta. Cruz, Manila are gone, signaling its reopening to vehicular traffic. ERIK ARAZAS

The area was supposed to be closed for a short period only in 2003, according to the resolution passed by the City Council.

"Closing temporarily this portion of Rizal Avenue will also hasten the redevelopment of the area, which became blighted due to the construction of the Light Railway Transit," the councilors said. But the road remained shut for four years and dozens of bricks were used to pave the road and "beautify" the area once known as the country's premier shopping district.

"*Maganda lang nung umpisa, pero nung kinalaunan, hindi na, lalo na nung may mga tumatambay na* (It was nice at the start, but later on, it wasn't anymore, especially when people started hanging out in the area)," said Velasquez.

Jeepney drivers and commuters also complained of heavier traffic in the area after they were diverted to secondary streets.

On the other hand, establishments that were supposed to benefit from the so-called "pedestrianization" lost their customers.

"Traffic was really bad on Tomas Mapua, which became like a funnel. You had to wait for around 30 minutes so some of my passengers would choose to walk instead," recalled jeepney driver Nanding Castillo, who plied the Blumentritt route.

These complaints eventually reached Lim who decided to overturn his predecessor's decision.

Because millions of pesos went into the 500-meter walkway, Lim told City Engineer Armand Andres to remove the tiles carefully so that these could be used in other projects.

"*Matagal na namin gustong mangyari ito* (We have long waited for this)," Castillo said.

**HONEST WORKER**

Jonathan Juan-Reyes (left), a balikbayan, hands over a reward to Oscar Guay (center), a janitor of Greenbelt 3 Mall in Makati City, who found and then returned Reyes' missing wallet to him. Guay found the wallet, which contained a sizable amount of money and credit cards, near the mall entrance and turned it over to his superiors led by Jason de las Alas (right). CONTRIBUTED PHOTO


METRO

Citizen's Call

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- Garbage dumped on your street unmake your day?
- Street diggings forever on the street where you live?
- Are you up in arms against the demolition of an ancestral house?
- Awed by a little-known barangay project with a big positive impact in your community?
- Got stuck in potholes?
- Fed up with cussing and feuding neighbors?
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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER


# Abu Sayyaf did not take part in ambush of Marines

ON TARGET

*Ramon Tulfo*

THE ABU SAYYAF AND THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) joined forces in ambushing the Marines on their way home and later beheaded and mutilated some of them.

True or false?

False. There were no Abu Sayyaf bandits among the ambushers, according to my informant, a military intelligence agent.

My unimpeachable source said the attackers were members of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front and the men of former Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar whose wife is now the incumbent governor.

The Abu Sayyaf bandits, who were holding Italian priest Giancarlo Bossi, were nowhere near the area as they were running away from their military pursuers.

The MILF and Akbar's men ambushed the Marine convoy to give the Abu Sayyaf kidnappers time to escape from their pursuers.

Akbar got 800 firearms from unidentified sources before the senatorial and local elections and distributed these among his men and other groups, my source said.

Some of the firearms were allegedly used in the ambush of the Marines.

Apart from rifles, the MILF and Akbar's men used rifle-propelled grenades and 81 mm mortars in ambushing the Marines.

According to my source, the MILF has RPGs or rifle-propelled grenades, but they don't have 81 mm mortars. Only Akbar has.

Question: Who provided Akbar with the 800 M-16 and M-14 rifles and 81 mm mortars?

Why did the military allow Akbar's men to have 81 mm mortars that are for the exclusive use of the military?

On the subject of air support, an OV 10 attack helicopter and two MG520 hovered over the scene of the fighting, but left without firing a shot, said my source.

The UH1H helicopter also hovered over the area, but left also without firing a shot. A gunner of one of the "Huey" choppers was hit, forcing the pilot to return to base.

It could not be determined why the reinforcement aircraft left and literally fed the ground troops to the dogs.

The only officer who could order the dispatch and withdrawal of air support to beleaguered troops was Lt. Gen. Eugene Cedo, chief of the Western Mindanao Command (Wesmincom).

Cedo was not at the Wesmincom headquarters in Zamboanga City, but in Cagayan de Oro City reportedly attending a security summit there.

Since Cedo was not in his area of command, he would not know the situation on the ground.

The military inefficiency in Basilan, as far as air support was concerned, seems a reenactment of the military bungling in the Abu Sayyaf raid at Dos Palmas resort in Palawan.

The Western Command under a Commodore Rabago didn't send aircraft to pursue the kidnappers who were riding on a fast seacraft. Rabago was reportedly playing golf at the time of the raid.

* * *

**The owner of a firm allegedly involved in the overpricing of lampposts in Cebu City during the Asean Summit this year frequents the casinos and reportedly loses millions almost daily. The guy could be gambling with people's money.**

# Russia vows response to expulsion of envoys

MOSCOW—RUSSIA VOWED A "targeted and appropriate" response to Britain's expulsion of four diplomats in a mounting confrontation over the radiation poisoning death of former KGB officer Alexander Litvinenko, but refrained from revealing its plans.

Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Grushko on Tuesday criticized Britain for demanding the extradition of the key suspect in the killing of the Kremlin critic, emphasizing that Russia's constitution forbids it, and urged other European nations not to gang up against Moscow.

Grushko called the British moves "a direct path to confrontation and narrowing of the opportunities for interaction with Russia on a wide spectrum of issues." He said Russia would inform Britain very soon of its response, while Britain said that retaliation would not be justified.

With Russian newspapers headlining a diplomatic war and state-run media unleashing a flood of indignant comments from Kremlin allies, Grushko had been expected to announce a response to Britain's decision to throw out four diplomats and place restrictions on visas issued to Russian government officials.

The moves followed Moscow's refusal to hand over Andrei Lugovoi, accused of the killing of Kremlin critic Alexander Litvinenko in London. Litvinenko died Nov. 23 after ingesting radioactive polonium-210, and blamed Russian President Vladimir Putin on his deathbed.

"Our reaction will be targeted and appropriate, and the British authorities will be officially informed of this in the nearest future," Grushko told reporters. He said Moscow would take care to ensure its moves would not hurt tourists, business people and other "everyday citizens" with ties to Britain.

Like Putin, Grushko railed against Britain for demanding Lugovoi's extradition, saying "they are trying to punish us for abiding by our own constitution."

"The Russian Constitution prohibits the extradition of its citizens. No political decision can change this legal fact."

Grushko seemed to suggest that Russia might not respond with a tit-for-tat expulsion of diplomats, stressing that if Moscow were to expel four people for every one that Britain has refused to hand over to Russia, "the British embassy would today be lacking 80 employees."

He said that Moscow has requested the extradition of 21 people for prosecution in Russia, including vocal Putin foe Boris Berezovsky—an associate of Litvinenko who claims the Kremlin was behind his killing—and Chechen rebel figure Akhmed Zakayev, both of whom have refugee status in Britain.

"Not one has been handed over," Grushko said.

In another hint at a possible response, Grushko said that "the line London has taken will complicate, if not make impossible, the cooperation of law enforcement organization on questions that touch the security interests of millions of Britons and Russians"—an apparent warning Moscow could reduce anti-terror cooperation.

Viktor Kremenyuk, deputy director of the Institute of USA and Canada Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, said he would advise the Kremlin not to escalate the conflict by responding with more expulsions or other sanctions. He also questioned why the British government had taken the case so far.

"I cannot understand why the British government has decided to turn this more or less usual criminal case into a political one," Kremenyuk said in an interview. "Why does one former KGB officer killing another deserve this attention?"

The answer to that is clear: the crime has touched sensitive nerves in Britain and Russia, highlighting deep-seated distrust between Russia and the West.

Litvinenko's dramatic death attracted worldwide attention and raised suspicion in the West that Putin's Kremlin could be as bad as its bitterest critics claim—willing to kill those who speak out against it. His poisoning came less than a month after investigative journalist and Putin critic Anna Politkovskaya was gunned down in Moscow, also sparking speculation of possible government involvement.

For the West, Russia's refusal to hand over Lugovoi highlights concerns about state manipulation of the justice system, widely seen as beholden to the political and economic interests of those in power.

In Moscow, the dispute has reinforced anger over what many Russians—Putin squarely among them—see as an infuriatingly superior attitude that hides double standards. Russia's oil-fueled economic resurgence has given Putin and lesser politicians increasing confidence to talk back to the West, reflected in a flow of fiery comments since British Foreign Secretary David Miliband announced the expulsions Monday.

Miliband "should understand that Russia isn't a former British colony, but a great power," said Alexander Babakin, the leader of a pro-Kremlin parliamentary faction, according to the RIA-Novosti news agency. *AP*

## China, US set meet on safety of Chinese seafood exports

BEIJING—CHINA WILL MEET WITH THE US at the end of the month to discuss a block on its seafood exports, an official said Wednesday, as Chinese authorities confirmed that tests performed on tires subject to a huge recall by Washington showed they were safe.

The five-day meeting between teams from the US Food and Drug Administration and Chinese food safety authorities was scheduled to begin July 31 in Beijing, said Li Yuanping, who heads import and export safety bureau at the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine.

Discussions were expected to help smooth over tensions triggered last month after the FDA announced that it would detain Chinese catfish, *basa* and dace, as well as shrimp and eel after repeated testing turned up contamination with drugs that have not been approved in the United States for use in farmed seafood.

International concern over the safety of Chinese exports has been heightened in recent months after levels of toxins and chemicals that do not meet the standards of other countries have been found in products like juice and toothpaste.

The officials will discuss the US block on Chinese seafood and future cooperation on food safety mechanisms, Li said. *AP*

**RELIGIOUS MILESTONE**
**BUDDHIST** nuns take part in prayer for the long life of the spiritual leader of Drupka lineage Gyalwang Drukpa in Naro Photang Puspahari temple in Shey, July 17. Monks and nuns from monasteries across the Himalayas gathered in India's far northern region of Ladakh to mark 800 years of the Drukpa, or "dragon" sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Starting before dawn, monks clad in maroon robes recited prayers for the long life of Gyalwang Drukpa, believed to be the 12th reincarnation of the founder of the order, the first Gyalwang. AFP

## 'Sweet' herb may be green gold for Paraguay

ASUNCION—PARAGUAY IS HOPING a small herb that is not trafficked, addictive, or even fattening, could prove to be the real deal that the food industry has been waiting for.

*Stevia*—Latin name *stevia rebaudiana bertoni*—has been used for centuries by the Guarani native people to sweeten their drinks, being 300 times sweeter than sugar with none of the calories.

Now the 60-centimeter high shrub has caught the eye of the granddaddy of soft drinks Coca Cola, and its poor, small Latin American home is hoping the cash tills will soon start ringing.

Coca Cola and Cargill, one of the top US food companies, recently unveiled plans to make a stevia-based sweetener under the trade name Rebiana.

And even though the herb is not yet authorized for consumption in the United States and has only a limited use in the European Union, it is already popular in Asia where China has planted thousands of hectares of rural land with the shrub.

"Coca-Cola's announcement has sparked a giant interest," said Nelson Gonzalez, head of the stevia chamber of commerce, a trade group of producers under the aegis of Paraguay's ministry of industry.

The market for stevia has grown in Argentina, Brazil and Ecuador in South America, as well as in China Japan and South Korea, but the US Food and Drug Administration has termed stevia an "unsafe food additive," while the European Union allows its sale only as a food supplement or in cosmetics.

"World demand is enormous," Gonzalez said. "But the sugar lobby wants to stop the importation of this natural, safe, revolutionary product."

Studies at the medical school at the University of Asuncion found stevia had a long list of beneficial properties, being an antioxidant, anti-inflammatory and an antibacterial agent useful in the battle against diabetes, high blood pressure and tooth decay.

But it is finding it hard to shake off fears over carcinogens which have dogged its sister, chemically manufactured sweeteners, saccharine and aspartame. *AFP*

## WORLDBRIEFS

### Death for bombers

MUMBAI—An Indian judge on Wednesday handed out the first death sentences to three men convicted of planting a series of bombs that ripped through India's financial capital in 1993, killing 257 people in India's deadliest terrorist attack. Justice Pramod Kode handed the sentences to Parvez Shaikh, Mushtaq Tarani and Abdul Ghani Turk. All three were convicted of planting explosives in Mumbai on March 12, 1993. More than 100 people were convicted of involvement in the plot, thought to be an act of revenge for the demolition of a 16th century mosque by Hindu nationalists in northern India in 1992. After the demolition, religious riots erupted, leaving more than 800 dead, most of them Muslims. *AP*

### US: Extradite Noriega

MIAMI—US prosecutors on Tuesday filed a request to have former Panamanian strongman Manuel Noriega extradited to France when he is released in September from a Miami prison where he is serving a drug trafficking sentence. Noriega was captured during the US invasion of Panama in 1989 and taken to the United States. That same year a French court sentenced him in absentia to 10 years in jail for money laundering. His Miami lawyer said he would vigorously fight the extradition request. "We're going to do everything humanly possible to prevent it from happening," lawyer Anthony Rubino said. *AFP*

### Clashes over fungus

BEIJING—A clash in China between two groups of Tibetans over the right to harvest a traditional medicine killed six people and injured more than 100 others, an official and a rights group said Wednesday. The clashes erupted Friday last week in Sichuan province between ethnic Tibetans from two neighbouring towns that have been embroiled in a dispute over caterpillar fungus, which it is believed can boost the immune system. "There were clashes between the two towns, but we are not allowed to speak publicly about this," a government spokesperson at Ganzi prefecture, which overseas the areas in southwestern China where the clashes occurred, told AFP by phone. *AFP*

## UN watchdog confirms more NKorea closures

KUALA LUMPUR—NORTH KOREA has shut down all the facilities at its main nuclear reactor, the head of the UN atomic watchdog said Wednesday, just hours before a new round of disarmament talks.

The closures, part of a landmark agreement in February aimed at getting the secretive state to abandon its nuclear weapons programs, were confirmed by inspectors from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

"We have verified that all five nuclear facilities have been shut down and that appropriate measures have been put in place, including sealing some of these facilities," IAEA chief Mohamed ElBaradei said on a visit to Malaysia.

"We expect that in the next few weeks we will continue to apply the necessary monitoring and verification measures," he said, adding that cameras were being installed for monitoring.

The five sites at North Korea's main nuclear reactor at Yongbyon, which manufactured plutonium that could be used to make atomic bombs, include a 1960s-era reactor that is not thought to have ever produced plutonium.

ElBaradei said shutting and sealing the facilities was only the first step in a very long and complicated process.

He also urged North Korea to be transparent about its nuclear weapons program as it worked towards denuclearization.

"We still have a long way to go. We still have to work with the North Koreans about the history of the production of these facilities, but that would be part of North Korea providing us with an inventory of nuclear materials," he said.

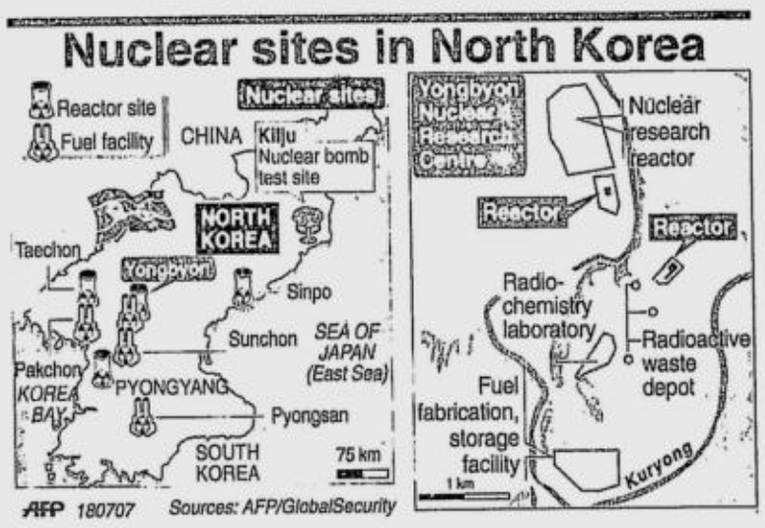
"What we have done in shutting down these five facilities is a very good positive step, but it's a very first step in a long road to travel."

But the IAEA confirmation will give an added push to the new round of six-nation talks opening later Wednesday in Beijing, where negotiators will get to work on the next phase of the Feb. 13 deal on disarming North Korea.

Top US nuclear negotiator Christopher Hill said in Beijing on Tuesday, after meeting the communist state's chief envoy, that no major obstacles currently impeded the drive to disarm North Korea of its nuclear weapons program.

Hill held a series of bilateral meetings with North Korea's Kim Kye-Gwan ahead of the six-party talks.

The reactor shutdown is the North's first step since 2002 towards ending its nuclear program, which culminated in an atomic bomb test last October. *AFP*




## World luminaries join forces to tackle tough global ills

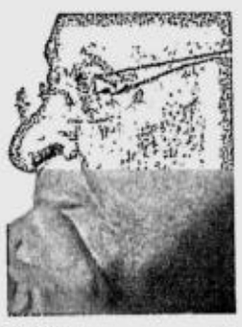
JOHANNESBURG—MELDING SERIOUS statesmanship and a dose of audacity, the former South African president, Nelson R. Mandela, and a clutch of world-famous figures plan to announce on Wednesday a private alliance to launch diplomatic assaults on the globe's most intractable problems.

The alliance, to be unveiled during events marking Mandela's 89th birthday, is to be called the Elders. Among others, it includes the retired Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu; former President Jimmy Carter; the former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan; and the human-rights activist and former Irish president Mary Robinson.

Many, including Mandela, have been early and harsh critics of President Bush and American foreign policy, particularly toward Iraq and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The group's members and backers insisted in interviews, however, that they were guided neither by ideology nor by geopolitical bent.

**ANNAN** AP

**MANDELA** AFP



**TUTU** AP

Mandela, in remarks prepared for Wednesday, said that since members no longer held public office, they could work solely for the common good, not for outside interests.

"This group can speak freely and boldly, working both publicly and behind the scenes on whatever actions need to be taken," he wrote. "Together we will work to support courage where there is fear, foster agreement where there is conflict and inspire hope where there is despair."

Whether governments that become the objects of the Elders' freelance diplomacy would agree remains to be seen. One of the group's founders and principal financial backers, the British tycoon Richard Branson, said leaders he had briefed—including Britain's prime minister, Gordon Brown, and South Africa's president, Thabo Mbeki—"very much support the initiative."

"There will always be skeptics of any positive initiatives, but these are people giving up their time for nothing," Branson said. "Most individuals in the world would welcome a group of people who are above ego, who, in the last 12 or 15 years of their lives, are above partisan politics."

The Elders would not try to solve all the world's problems, he said, but would work "stone by stone" on those issues where they can do some good.

At least one veteran crisis-solver, the former American secretary of state Madeleine Albright, said the idea should not be dismissed.

"It's worth having people with experience see what they can do," Albright, reached by telephone in Paris, said Tuesday. "So much of diplomacy is having an outsider lay out what the issues are—having a wider outside view."

She added that having said that, much of diplomacy also requires the weight of nations like the United States to succeed. "Whether these people would be representing a country or themselves will make a difference," she said. *New York Times News Service*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

# 200 feared killed in Brazil air crash

SAO PAULO—A BRAZILIAN PASSENGER JET CRASHED and burst into flames at a Sao Paolo airport on Tuesday, leaving as many as 200 people feared dead in what would be Brazil's deadliest air disaster.

Sao Paulo State Governor Jose Serra said none of the 176 people aboard Tam Airlines ill-fated Flight 3054 could have survived the crash, with temperatures in the blaze reaching 1,000 degrees centigrade. Rescuers spoke of some 25 further fatalities on the ground.

Tam, Brazil's largest airline, said the Airbus 320 careened off the runway after landing in driving rain, skidded across a crowded avenue, slammed into the company's offices and burst into flames.

"The plane accelerated when it reached the end of the runway and tried to take off again to avoid the avenue, but it crashed into the building and exploded," salesman Junior Matos said after witnessing the disaster.

The flight from the southern city of Porto Alegre was landing at Sao Paulo's Congonhas airport.

The airport—the busiest in Brazil—is notorious for its short and often slippery runway, and its proximity to the nearby city center.

Early Wednesday, 53 bodies had been retrieved from the burning site, while another two people died after being taken to a hospital.

Sixteen of the confirmed fatalities were on the ground when the plane crashed into the office building.

"There's 200 killed over there," Manuel Antonio da Silva Araujo, a colonel in Sao Paulo's fire department said, according to the online edition of the Folha de Sao Paulo daily.

"I saw about 25 charred bodies around the plane, and a dead couple inside a car," said Douglas Ferrari, a doctor who assisted firefighters in their rescue efforts.

"It was horrible," he said, adding that many people had jumped out of the windows of the low-rise office building.

The avenue across which the plane skidded was "packed with people" at the time, a street vendor said.

Only the tail end of the aircraft remained visible from outside the building.

At Porto Alegre's airport, anxious relatives and friends waited for news of their loved ones, many wailing and crying.

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva declared three days of national mourning.

**RESCUERS look for corpses of victims at a building of Tam Express, set on fire by an A320 aircraft of the same company that skidded off the runway and slammed into it in Sao Paulo, Brazil.** AFP

Sao Paulo's attorney general Rodrigo Pinho said authorities would lead a thorough investigation "to determine the cause and to identify who was responsible."

Congonhas airport was closed to air traffic and flights were diverted to other airports serving the Sao Paulo area.

Congonhas, which is just a few kilometers from the center of Brazil's financial capital, is mainly used for regional flights from other parts of Brazil and South America. The Guarulhos International Airport handles most longer-range flights.

Pilots consider the airport to be particularly challenging because of the intense traffic, the nearby high-rise buildings and what some critics call a particularly short runway.

In February, a local judge banned the use of the airport by Fokker 100, Boeing 737-800 and Boeing 737/700 jetliners, but the ruling was overturned by an appeals court.

The previous worst accident in Brazil's aviation history occurred on Sept. 29, when a Brazilian Gol Boeing 737 flying from Manaos to Brasilia crashed into the Amazon jungle killing all 154 people on board after it was clipped in mid-air with a small private jet. The occupants of the smaller jet were unhurt. *AFP*

## Thai girl born on 7/7/7 gets college scholarship

BANGKOK—A BABY GIRL BORN on July 7, 2007—07/07/07—in the back of a Thai taxi bearing the license plate 7777 is to receive a scholarship worth 700,000 baht ($21,000), a college said Wednesday.

The girl, who has not yet been named but received the nickname "Seven," is just days old, but the Panyapiwat Institution of Technology has promised her a bursary until she graduates.

"It is an unconditional scholarship that we gave to her because she was born on July 7 of the year 2007, and in a taxi with the license plate 7777," said Ratana Prasertsom, the rector of the institute.

"And when the mother and girl checked in at the hospital, they were given room 707 on the seventh floor."

Thais place great faith in the mystical importance of numbers, and the succession of sevens in the baby's birth has been seen as deeply auspicious. Newspapers have devoted entire pages to the infant and her good fortune. *AFP*

**REMEMBERING DARFUR**
**Geneva's landmark, the water fountain Jet d'Eau, or water jet, is illuminated in red to symbolize the ongoing bloodshed in Sudan's Darfur region, on the International Justice Day, in Geneva, Switzerland, late Tuesday evening.** AP

## Japan's quake-hit nuke plant ordered shut

KASHIWAZAKI—AUTHORITIES on Wednesday ordered the world's largest nuclear plant to stay shut indefinitely after Japan's deadly earthquake, as its operator revealed a radiation leak was worse than thought.

The sprawling Kashiwazaki-Kariwa power plant suffered a small radiation leak and dozens of other problems in Monday's 6.8 Richter-scale quake, whose epicenter was just nine kilometers away.

Tokyo Electric Power Co. (Tepco), the operator of the plant, said water that leaked into the sea was 1.5 times more radioactive than it initially estimated. But it said the level still did not pose a health risk.

Tepco president Tsunehisa Katsumata said there was "no doubt" that the earthquake was stronger than the plant was designed for, but he said there were no serious problems with the nuclear reactors.

He earlier changed from his usual business suit to a plant worker's blue uniform to visit the site northwest of Tokyo.

"We regret what happened and will strive to make this a power plant that is safe and we can be proud of," he said on the sidelines of the one-hour visit to the facility.

Kashiwazaki Mayor Hiroshi Aida summoned the Tepco president and banned him from reopening any of the plant until it is confirmed safe.

Katsumata bowed deeply before the mayor, saying: "I apologize from the bottom of my heart for causing tremendous concerns and nuisance."

The plant's operations have been suspended since the earthquake, which killed nine people, injured more than 1,000 more and sent thousands of people to shelters.

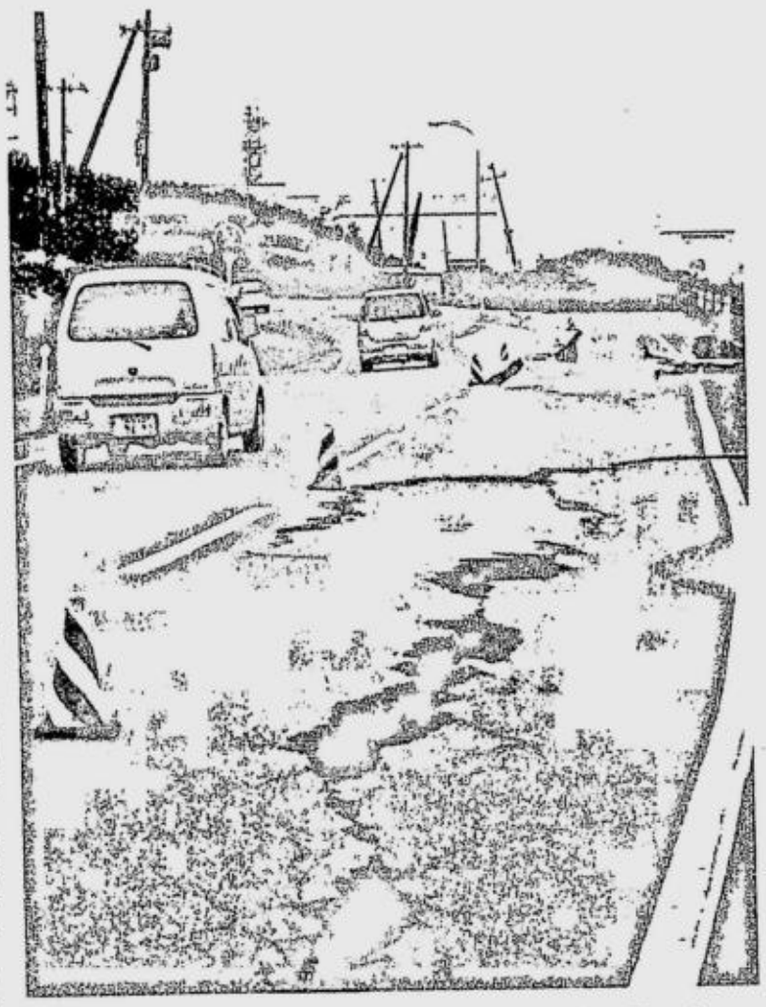
The controversy began to take on an international dimension as Mohamed ElBaradei, the head of the UN nuclear watchdog, called for transparency.

"Clearly, Japan needs to go into a full investigation of the structure, the systems, the components of the reactor to make sure that we learn the necessary lesson from the earthquake," the International Atomic Energy Agency chief said on a visit to Kuala Lumpur.

Japanese researchers were also looking into whether a break in the earth's crust that caused the quake may stretch under the seaside plant.

"We cannot deny the possibility" it sat on an earth fault, said Osamu Kamigaichi with the earthquake division of the meteorological agency.

The government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who faces tough elections later this month, has gone on the offensive over the nuclear scare. *AFP*



**VEHICLES drive on a damaged road leading to the Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant (right-background) in Kariwa village, Kashiwazaki, on July 18.** AFP

## Libya lifts death sentences of 6 foreign medics

LIBYA ON TUESDAY COMMUTED the death sentences of five Bulgarian nurses and a Palestinian doctor convicted of having intentionally infected hundreds of Libyan children with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Libya changed the medical workers' sentences to life in prison after the families of the infected children each received $1 million. The decision could pave the way for a deal in which the Libyan government transfers the medical workers to Bulgaria, where it is probable they would be released.

Bulgaria has consistently said the medical workers are not guilty.

"The Bulgarian state institutions have already started the procedural steps needed for the transfer," said Dimiter Tzantcev, Bulgaria's Foreign Ministry spokesperson. "The formal request will be made tomorrow."

Libya's foreign minister, Abdel-Rahman Shalqam, said that his government would most likely grant the request, though he did not say when.

"Issuing this decision automatically closes the legal case against them," Shalqam said. "There is a legal cooperation agreement between Libya and Bulgaria, and we don't mind that the Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor benefit from it."

The decision by Libya's High Judicial Council to commute the sentences was reported Tuesday by the country's official news agency, Jana.

The convoluted case, in which the medical workers were twice ordered to die before a firing squad, began in February 1998 when the nurses arrived to take jobs at Al Fateh Children's Hospital in Benghazi, Libya's second largest city.

By August that year, children at the hospital began testing positive for HIV. Health authorities soon realized they had a major problem. Dozens of Bulgarian medical workers were arrested and a videotaped search of the apartment of one purported to turn up vials of HIV-tainted blood. Two of the nurses eventually confessed but said later that they had been forced to do so under torture. *NYT*

# Al-Qaida determined to strike US: intelligence report

WASHINGTON—Al-QAIDA HAS regrouped in its Pakistani "safe haven" and is determined to inflict mass casualties through new attacks on the United States, a US intelligence report warned on Tuesday.

Osama bin Laden's extremist group remains bent on acquiring weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear and biological arms, "and would not hesitate to use them" if it develops the capability, the report said.

The "key judgments" on the terrorist threat to the United States, contained in a new National Intelligence Estimate, concluded that al-Qaida was gaining strength in a lawless zone of Pakistan on the border with Afghanistan.

"As a result, we judge the United States currently is in a heightened threat environment," said the report, which comes nearly six years after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in which some 3,000 people were killed.

The report's findings prompted anger from Democrats who accused President George W. Bush of rendering the United States more vulnerable by invading Iraq.

Bush fired back by insisting that his administration's actions since 9/11 had taken the fight to al-Qaida.

"Al-Qaida is strong today, but they're not nearly as strong as they were prior to September the 11th, 2001," he told reporters after talks with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon.

Adamant that al-Qaida wanted a foothold in Iraq "to spread their poisonous ideology," Bush said the group "would have been a heck of a lot stronger today had we not stayed on the offense."

The intelligence report maintained that "al-Qaida in Iraq" has become "the most visible and capable affiliate" of Bin Laden's network with an intent to attack the United States.

But Sen. Joseph Biden, a Democratic contender in the 2008 White House race, said al-Qaida in Iraq was a "Bush-fulfilling prophecy" that did not exist before the United States invaded the country.

The new report was "a devastating indictment of the administration's failure to accomplish its most important mission: destroying al-Qaida and the threat it poses," he said. *AFP*

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MARK Acosta of Mapua typifies intensity as he gets into a fierce rebound tussle against a Perpetual defender in their game yesterday. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

# Stags nip Blazers; Cards score

## Mapua finishes Perpetual off in extra period

**NOWHERE TO RUN**
Sonny Thoss (right) of Alaska finds himself walled-in by the tight defense of the Talk 'N Text pair of Macmac Cardona (left) and Yancy de Ocampo in Game 6 of the PBA Fiesta Cup championship series last night. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

**GAMES TOMORROW (The Arena)**
2 p.m.—Letran vs Jose Rizal (Srs)
4 p.m.—San Sebastian vs San Beda (Srs)

**By Marc Anthony Reyes**

CLEARLY, HE DOESN'T WANT to be called Pamboy "The Fumble" Raymundo.

The 5-foot-10 pointguard—always willing to put matters in his own hands at crunchtime—made a daring move to shed the nickname he has unfairly acquired by knocking in a three-pointer in the last two minutes to lift San Sebastian over St. Benilde, 60-54, yesterday in the NCAA men's basketball tournament.

Blamed for his hasty endgame decisions in the past games, particularly in the Stags' 68-66 loss to Jose Rizal three weeks ago, Raymundo redeemed himself big time with that triple that gave the Stags a 56-52 breather from the rampaging Blazers at The Arena in San Juan.

### Retaliation

Martin Urra Jr. quickly retaliated with a close-range jumper but the sophomore playmaker answered back with two free throws off Urra's foul to make it 58-54 with just 20.3 seconds left in the game.

St. Benilde then missed from the three-point zone and San Sebastian clinched a second consecutive victory that upped its record to 3-2 behind unbeaten leaders San Beda and Letran.

### Mapua up

Jonathan Banal hit two free throws to forge overtime before nailing a three-pointer in the last two minutes to seal an 85-75 Mapua victory over Perpetual in the second game.

Fouled by Michael Kong just as the regulation buzzer sounded, Banal calmly sank two charities to extend the game, 68-all.

And with just two minutes left, he fired a triple that made it 77-70 and launched the Cardinals to their second win in six games.

The Altas also finished at 2-4 after their first round stint with the Blazers falling to 1-4.

"We lost our bearing in the third quarter right after making big stops in the second quarter," said San Sebastian coach Jorge Gallent. "But it's a good thing we recovered it in the homestretch."

Raymundo finished with seven points, five of them in the payoff period, on top of six assists, two rebounds and two steals.

The Blazers, who trailed at 52-53 with less than three minutes left on Paolo Orbeta's five-point binge, suffered their third straight loss for a 1-4 slate.

### Clamp down

The Stags, who followed up their 66-63 win over Mapua last July 13, were spearheaded by Jim Viray, who with 16 points, 10 in the second period where the Stags clamped down on the Blazers to take a 22-9 lead.

Jimbo Aquino and Juanio Quiamco chipped in 11 and 10 points, respectively. Big man Gilbert Bulawan had eight points and five rebounds, while Jason Ballesteros came up with 14 rebounds and three blocks.

**The scores:**

**First Game**

**SAN SEBASTIAN 60**—Viray 16, Aquino 11, Quiamco 10, Bulawan 8, Raymundo 7, Delgado 4, Najorda 2, Dela Cruz 2, Ballesteros 0, Saquillo 0.

**ST. BENILDE 54**—Orbeta 11, M. Urra Jr. 11, Layug 7, Porras 7, Johnston 5, Morial 4, Sevilla 3, Aldover 2, Cabatu 2, David 1, Cadiz 1, Manlapaz 0, D. Urra III 0, Robles 0.

**Quarters:** 8-11, 30-20, 43-40, 60-54

**Second Game**

**MAPUA 85**—Co 26, Dela Pena 23, Pascual 11, Del Rosario 11, Banal 7, Acosta 4, Sumalinog 3, Guillermo 0, Palomique 0, Cornejo 0, Mazo 0.

**PERPETUAL 75**—Reyes 16, Lee 10, Ynion 10, Kong 10, Manuel 10, Galabin 9, Dysam 8, Liaz 2, Balboa 0, Joe 0, Salanga 0, Febrian 0.

**Quarters:** 20-15, 36-40, 55-51, 68-68, 85-75 OT

# Green Archers wary of Tamaraws' power

FOR LA SALLE COACH FRANZ Pumaren, the Far Eastern Tamaraws pose a real threat, if not grave danger.

He believes the Green Archers would find it difficult to post a third blowout win against the Tamaraws when they tangle today in the UAAP men's basketball tournament at the Ninoy Aquino Stadium.

"With respect to UP and Adamson, I think our real test will be against FEU," said Pumaren. "They have tough, big guys."

The Archers posted an average winning margin of 22.5 points against opening-day opponent UP Maroons, 82-61, and Adamson Falcons, 99-75.

While the Archers try to join the University of the East Warriors on top at 4 p.m., defending champion University of Santo Tomas and Adamson will battle it out for their first victory at 2 p.m.

Jervy Cruz has been posting double-double averages (17.5 points, 15.5 rebounds) for the Tigers, but key players from last season's title-run like Anthony Espiritu and Dylan Ababou have been struggling for two straight games.

Finding a scorer, though, hasn't been a problem for La Salle with Rico Maierhofer, Cholo Villanueva, James Mangahas, TY Tang and JV Casio taking caring of the offensive chores.

Yet this time, Pumaren worries about the new, but experienced players in the FEU roster.

"I don't believe it when they say they have 10 rookies," he said. "Technically they're rookies, but they're veterans in terms of age and playing experience. Their rookies are not fresh high school graduates, they're college transferees."

Among the touted freshmen are JR Cawaling and Paul Sanga, who teamed up with veteran Marlon Adolfo in the Tamaraws' triumph over the Tigers, 81-66, last Saturday.

Rookie mentor Glenn Capacio believes his Tamaraws can measure up against the favored Archers.

"La Salle is beatable, we just have to find their weaknesses," noted Capacio.

| STANDINGS | W | L |
|---|---|---|
| UE | 3 | 0 |
| La Salle | 2 | 0 |
| NU | 2 | 1 |
| Ateneo | 2 | 1 |
| FEU | 1 | 1 |
| Adamson | 0 | 2 |
| UST | 0 | 2 |
| UP | 0 | 2 |

**GAMES TODAY**
*(Ninoy Aquino Stadium)*
2 p.m.—Adamson vs UST (Srs)
4 p.m.—La Salle vs FEU (Srs)

In juniors play yesterday, the NU Bullpups coasted to their third straight victory with an 82-70 rout of the UE Pages at the Adamson Gym.

The Bullpups, who only won one game last season, banked on Kevin Batac and rookie center Segundo Elegores to grab a share of the lead.

Batac shot 19 points, while Elegores posted a double-double effort of 19 markers and 16 rebounds.

The Junior Archers also remained unbeaten in three games after a 93-79 thrashing of the UST Tiger Cubs.

*Jasmine W. Payo*

# FG Foundation still backs Olympic program

**By June Navarro**

THE FIRST GENTLEMAN FOUNDATION IS working silently to fulfill a commitment many thought has already been forgotten.

Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) chair William "Butch" Ramirez bared that the fund-raising drive by President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband Mike Arroyo has been quietly going on to support the training of Olympic-potential athletes from seven identified sports.

The Foundation has pledged to tap private sponsors, which will act as godfathers of the chosen athletes from taekwondo, boxing, diving, archery, wushu, gymnastics and bowling.

"Mr. Arroyo doesn't want to make a big fuss out of it," said Ramirez, who met with the President's husband over the weekend. "He said the FG Foundation would tap corporate sponsors for each of the chosen sport."

The PSC head said that the FG Foundation would most likely knock on the doors of private companies, which earlier supported the country's hosting of the Southeast Asian Games two years ago.

### Big sponsors

San Miguel Corp., SMART and Globe Telecoms were among the big sponsors responsible for the successful staging of the SEAG's 23rd edition held in Metro Manila, Los Baños, Subic, Clark, Cebu City and Bacolod City.

"He (Arroyo) told us that he would honor his commitment to help the country's Olympic drive. With that development, our program is now in full blast," said Ramirez.

The blueprint of the PSC's Olympic drive was laid out early this year but its implementation got stalled after Arroyo underwent a delicate open-heart surgery last April.

Using its own funds, the PSC finally sent 20 athletes from diving, wushu, weightlifting and gymnastics to Guangzhou, China, last month for a two-month training as part of the country's buildup for the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

Ramirez said Arroyo chose the seven disciplines based on their chances of winning the first-ever Olympic gold for the country.

### Good chances

"Other sports have chances as well but the First Gentleman considered these seven as the disciplines where we have a pretty good chance of winning the gold," said Ramirez. "The bulk of the proceeds from the fund-raising campaign will go to these sports."

# Hope sheds 'favorite' tag as girls' volley final starts

**GAMES TODAY (*USLS-IS Covered Court*)**
10:30 a.m.—USPF vs USLS-IS
3:00 p.m.—USLS-IS vs CPU
4:30 p.m.—USPF vs HCS

**Cedelf P. Tupas,** *Inquirer Visayas*

BACOLOD CITY—PARADING WHAT APpears to be the most formidable roster on paper does not make Manila champion Hope Christian School the heavy favorite in the national finals of the Shakey's Girls Volleyball Invitational League here.

That's the assessment of HCS coach Jerry Yee, who picked University of St. La Salle-Integrated School and Iloilo's Central Philippine as the top contenders for the crown of the national tournament that drew a total of 43 teams in four provincial elimination tournaments.

"I can't say we're the favorites. We're just happy to be here and play against the best teams in the country," said Yee, whose team battles University of Southern Philippines Foundation of Cebu at 3 p.m. today.

Yee has Palarong Pambansa veterans Jamanea Ferrer, Beverly Chan, Carmela Garbin, Juliet So and Melissa Gohing in his line-up. The five players stood at the forefront of NCR's silver medal finish in the Koronadal Palaro last April.

La Salle's top players Dancel Jan Dusaran, Kaye Zaldarriaga and Gianes Dolar actually have a score to settle with Hope's Palaro players, who relegated them to third place in the national meet.

With the single-round format being adapted and at least two teams playing twice in a day, either USLS-IS or University of Southern Philippines Foundation can nail the first championship berth today.

The host team tests USPF in the opening match at 10:30 a.m. *With a report from Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

# Cyna, Bambee share lead in Junior World

**SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA—CYNA Rodriguez and Bambee dela Paz opened the Philippine campaign on a high note by firing identical two-under-par 72s on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) to join a seven-player logjam for the lead in the girls' 15-17 years division of the 2007 Callaway Junior World Golf Championships here.**

The 15-year-old Rodriguez birdied two of the last three holes while dela Paz strung up three birdies from the 13th to get a piece of top spot at the Torrey Pines north course.

They were bunched with Sue Kim of Canada, Hsieh Yu-ling of Taiwan, Australian Whitney Hiller and Americans Danielle Frasier and Cheyenne Woods.

Dottie Ardina, spearhead of the 43-strong Junior Golf Foundation of the Philippines delegation, had a 73 and stood five shots behind in the girls' 13-14 category.

Defending champion Mia Legaspi stood in fourth place in the girls' 7-8 class, Bernice Olivarez-Ilas was running fifth in the girls' 6-under category and Andie Unson was in sixth spot after a 75 in the girls' 11-12 years.

Legaspi's 62 left her five off the American leader, Olivares-Ilas trailed the Mexican leader by six and Unson was four behind the US bet.

The RP boys couldn't keep up with the torrid scoring with Class A bets Mico Yee and John Kier Abdon soaring to 76 and 80, respectively. AR Ramos was tied for 17th in boys' 9-10 and Marcel Puyat was in a group at 19th in boys' 13-14.

The RP Jungolf campaign is supported by PAL, PCSO, Electrobus/Callaway, INQUIRER GOLF and Intel.

**The Philippine results:**

**Class A:** Girls—72 C. Rodriguez T1, 72 B. dela Paz T1, 77 C. Ikeda T22, 78 R. De Guzman, 78 P. Sotto T36, 79 S. Baraquiel T51. Boys—76 M. Yee T39, 80 J. Abdon T100, 87 A. Guy T148.

**Class B:** Girls—73 D. Ardina T9, 75 A. de Villa T12, 80 M. Woo T49, 91 M. Monsalve T85. Boys—74 M. Puyat T19, 75 W. Superal T28, 79 J. Carlos T91, 79 E. Kishida T91.

**Class C:** Girls—75 A. Unson T6, 79 I. Gabasa T18, 84 T. Sabater T34 Boys—74 M. Tabuena, 75, JR Gonzales, 78 LJ Go, 78 B. dela Paz

**Class D:** Girls—59 P. Superal T5, 62 Daniela Uy T12, 67 B. Pagdanganan T30. Boys—65 JR Ramos T17, 67 T. Arevalo, T28, 68 M. Yee T36.

**Class E:** Girls—62 M. Legaspi T4, 63 LK Go 5th, 67 A. Arevalo T14. Boys—65 L. Uy T24, 69 R. Monsalve T42, 70 K. Arevalo T47, 77 E. Lal T79

**Class F:** Girls—62 B Olivarez-Ilas 5, 64 A. Nocum 6. Boys—66 P. Winsett T20, 70 A. Ballesteros T34, 79 D. Bantug T49

**PRINCESS Mary Superal tees off on her way to a 59 in the girls' Class D competitions.** NICK SAGMIT/CONTRIBUTOR

# A grand slam wish for MVP

**IN HUDDLE**

*Beth Celis*

BIRTHDAY BOY Manny V. Pangilinan, PLDT/SBP chair, did not have just one but three wishes to ask the birthday genie this year.

"My birthday wish? *Di ba* three wishes *yan?*" MVP texted back when I asked him what his birthday (July 14) wish is.

"*Lulubusin ko na ha?* I want a grand slam, three championships—one for Talk 'N Text in the PBA, another for San Beda in the NCAA and a third for Ateneo in the UAAP," he said.

* * *

**Last Tuesday, as the giant three-tiered birthday cake with dark blue icing was wheeled onto the stage during MVP's grand bash at the NBC tent in Taguig, he repeated his three wishes, just before he blew the candles on his cake.**

**This time, the two teams he wished championships for were present. Only Talk 'N Text was not there because the Phone Pals were preparing for Game 6 of the PBA best-of-7 Fiesta Cup championship series.**

**If the Phone Pals win over Alaska Wednesday night, (or Friday), MVP's first of three wishes would have been granted. He doesn't know it, but I saw PBA chair Ricky Vargas cross his fingers as MVP made his wish for Talk 'N Text.**

**MVP is an alumnus of both San Beda and Ateneo which enjoy tremendous moral and financial support from him.**

* * *

In addition to the Ateneo Blue Eagles headed by coach Norman Black and the San Beda Red Lions, among MVP's well-wishers from the basketball community included Harbour Centre owner Mikee Romero, Air 21 governor and SBP director Lito Alvarez, SBP executive director Pato Gregorio, SBP corporate secretary lawyer Marievic Anonuevo, SBP directors Bernie Atienza, Noli Eala and Nic Jorge, women's national coach Fritz Gaston and his assistant Raymond Celis and sports columnist Ronnie Nathanielsz.

Simultaneous with MVP's 61st birthday celebration was the launching of the PLDT/Smart Foundation, also chaired by MVP. Providing the evening's entertainment was Martin Nievera who was flown in from the United States to do his Las Vegas act here in Manila.

* * *

**Gary David must have gotten a good addition to his rehab therapy during the PBA Awards Night. I heard his name called a number of times and he must have been the most awarded player this season.**

**Gary said he got four awards this year. And that's not to mention other major nominations, including one for the Most Valuable Player Award.**

**On his junior year in the PBA, the Air 21 cager was named to the Mythical Five and the All-Defensive Team. He also brought home the Sportsmanship and Most Improved Player trophies.**

* * *

What did he do to deserve all these?

Gary said that although he really, really worked hard to excel in his profession, always giving that extra effort, extra sweat and extra mile, he had abandoned all hopes of winning any year-end award after he was hurt badly going into the last two games of the eliminations.

"I suffered an ACL injury and I knew I was going to be sidelined for sometime," he said.

That's why he was very surprised, but very thankful and happy, when his name was called again and again and again that night.

* * *

**In his first two years with the pros, Gary failed to win an award, although he had an MVP trophy to show in the PBL. He played one season for the Coca-Cola Tigers under coach Chot Reyes before he was recruited by Air 21 coach Bo Perasol.**

**At 28, Gary feels he still has much, much more to give "as soon as I'm fully rehabilitated."**

* * *

HOOPVINE: Player agent Danny Espiritu reports that Red Bull has renewed the contracts of Leo Najorda, Junthy Valenzuela and Mike Hrabak, whose old pacts were set to expire at the end of this season. They signed new two-year deals... Many happy returns to Sta. Lucia governor Buddy Encarnado, who marks another milestone today.

# Condes title defense here a possibility

THERE'S NO STOPPING FLORANTE CONDES' rise to superstardom.

And Filipino fans may just get the chance to see the boxer dubbed "Little Pacquiao" up close if plans to have him fight here don't miscarry.

Top promoter Rod Nazario said Plan B of the second stage of Condes' career will have the newly-minted IBF minimumweight champion making a title defense on Oct. 27 at the Ynares Center in Antipolo City.

Plan A, hatched by no less than Filipino ring icon Manny Pacquiao, calls for Condes to fight under the Las Vegas card pitting the reigning super featherweight international champion against Mexican Marco Antonio Barrera on Oct. 6.

Meanwhile, Filipinos can get to see what the fuss over Condes is all about when In This Corner airs his fight against Indonesian Muhammad Rachman on Sunday. The show airs on NBN-4 from 7-9 p.m.

Presented by San Miguel Corp. and backed by Thunderbird Resort, the Condes-Rachman bout took place last July 7 in Jakarta with the Filipino lifting Rachman's crown via a split decision. Condes, who fights out of Aljoe Jaro's star-studded stable, scored knockdowns in the third and tenth rounds to capture the IBF 105-lb crown.

Highlights of Condes' other bouts against Sonny Boy Jaro, Obet Desantores, Ryan Bito, Sanan Nongklek 3K Battery of Thailand, Philip Parcon and Elmer Gejon will also be shown. Sev Sarmenta will do the blow-by-blow, while Moy Lainez will take care of the analysis in the special show dubbed "Condes' Jakarta Conquest."

# Chan World Archery tilt No. 4

DUMAGUETE CITY—DUMAGUETE archer Jennifer Dy Chan finished fourth out of 130 female archers in the 44th Outdoor World Archery Championships in Leipzig, Germany, which ended Sunday.

Chan, former Southeast Asian Games gold medalist and Sydney Olympian, represented the Philippines, along with eight other members of the Philippine archery team, in the competition.

Chan is currently ranked 26th worldwide. Her performance in Leipzig was an improvement over her 11th overall standing in the Stage-One-Meteksan Archery World Cup 2007 in Ulsan, Korea last April.

Another Dumaguete archer, Mark Javier, placed 85th in the Men's Recurve Individual Event. *Alex Pal, Inquirer Visayas*

## GDAP Demo Day at City Golf today

THE DEMO DAYS SERIES OF THE GOLF DISTRIBUTORS ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines (GDAP) resumes today (Thursday, July 19) at the City Golf Driving Range in Ortigas, Pasig. Top brands are joining the second offering of a series which started last month at Wack Wack. The mini-exhibition which will allow range visitors to use new equipment and check on new lines of apparel and accessories starts at 5 p.m. and ends at 9 p.m. Joining the Demo Day are Nike Golf, Dunlop, Callaway, Macbec, Ashworth, Ping, Cleveland, Tour Stage, Maruman and Wilson. Revicon will also do a product sampling. The Demo Day Series is part of the run up to the 12th Philippine International Golf Show being spearheaded by GDAP president Gerald Raymundo and exhibit chair Ana Herrera. For inquiries, please call 8451324, 7596680 or 3723935 loc. 105.

# Naascu caging reels off Saturday

A HEAVY FIVE-GAME SCHEDULE will usher in the seventh season of the NAASCU (National Athletics Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities) basketball tournament on Saturday at the Rizal Coliseum.

The reigning champion in the seniors division, AMA Computer, takes on last year's runnerup, STI College, in the opening game at 8 a.m. to signal the start of the 10-team tournament.

The other games pit five-time champion University of Manila vs Pamantasan Lunsod ng Pasay, St. Claire vs University of Makati, Centro Escolar vs San Sebastian Cavite, and Holy Angel Pampanga vs New Era. Dr. Jay Adalem, NAASCU president, and Dr. Reynaldo delos Santos, added that second semester competitionss will include volleyball, chess, table tennis, karate and marathon.

# Zerna captures Puyat 9-ball crown

NEGROS BILLIARD STABLE ACE Ricky Zerna clustered nine racks to post a stunning 11-9 come-from-behind victory over John Rebong and rule the 2007 Puyat Sports 9-Ball Tournament Sunday night at the Bowling Inn on Taft Avenue, Manila.

Way behind at 2-9, Zerna proved his mettle by blanking Rebong the rest of the way en route to the title and the P60,000 top prize.

Zerna earlier beat Jojo Santos, 9-3, in the winners' bracket before losing to 2006 Sydney World Junior quarterfinalist Renemar David, 9-2, that put him in the losers' side of the event.

In the one loss-side, Zerna needed to dispose of national women's team member Iris Ranola, 9-3, Roberto Dy, 9-7, and Napoleon Labrador, 9-4, before facing Rebong, a protege of Alex Pagulayan. Zerna will compete in the 2007 Cebu Open on July 26-29. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

**FIANZA: Level playing field key to Philracom's success this year.** PDI PHOTO

# Philracom on track for P10-B year

EVEN WITH MORE THAN FIVE MONTHS to go before the end of the current racing season, the Philracom has already surpassed its earnings for all of last year and is on course towards posting the all-time mark in sales of close to P10 billion.

After showing a dip in sales of P200 million last year compared to 2005, sales this year have improved by P263 million from January to June alone, and the racing commission expects no less than a total improvement of P600 million in overall sales for the year.

The Philracom is targeting total sales of around P9.8 billion by the end of the year, which would mean something like P1.5 billion in taxes which the government uses to finance, among other things, the Philippine Sports Commission. .

"We have given the industry a more level playing field, that's why people bet in the races more," said retired police general Florencio Fianza, who is entering the second year of chairmanship of the agency.

Fianza, who curbed out some of the bad practices in the industry and enforced new rules in handicapping at the start of the year, has also started renovating the offices in Makati, which will end with the computerization of the entire agency.

The Philracom was given a P61 million budget by the government to work with for the year, and if the agency does achieve its P9.8 billion target, the Philracom will come up with returns of around 25 times for the government's investment.

"That's why we will up prizes (in stakes races) next year by another P15 million, to entice the horseowners more and give the public better races," added Fianza, who will do something unprecedented next year by putting up additional prizes in regular races.

For next year, there will be 100 regular races which will carry additional prizes of P50,000 each, which would up the regular take of the winners and placers from somewhere to P150,000 to P160,000 per won race.

Also, all stakes races sponsored by the Philracom for next year will carry added prizes of no less than P1 million each aside from the introduction of a "Philracom Monthly Race" that will have pots of P500,000 each.

# Vino skids; Colombian cops stage

**BRIANCON, FRANCE—ALEXANdre Vinokourov's yellow jersey hopes suffered a crushing blow here Tuesday as the Tour de France left the Alps after three action-filled days of mountain racing.**

Colombia's Mauricio Soler, of Barloworld, claimed victory on the ninth stage, a 159.5km run from Val d'Isere to here which included the first two unclassified-graded climbs of the race.

Michael Rasmussen of Denmark, the winner of Sunday's second alpine stage to Tignes, retained the leader's yellow jersey with another solid performance which has made him Rabobank's new title contender.

After his team leader Denis Menchov trailed in over four minutes adrift, to sit 18th overall at 7:10 behind Rasmussen, the Danish two-time winner of the race's polka dot jersey was understandably bullish.

Vinokourov, who has been losing time gradually to his rivals ever since sustaining knee injuries in a crash on the fifth stage, is in 21st overall at 8:05 behind the skinny Dane, whose ambitions will however be tested to the full in Saturday's first big time trial in Albi.

As the Galibier's steep gradients began to take their toll, Vinokourov was forced to virtually relinquish leadership of Astana to German teammate Andreas Kloden.

The Kazakh also had to consult the race doctor, and then told Kloden to ride ahead in a bid to consolidate Astana's yellow jersey hopes.

Kloden assumed the role well, finishing the stage just 46 seconds behind Soler, and just seconds behind a few of his yellow jersey rivals to sit eighth overall at 3:50.

Caisse d'Epargne's Alejandro Valverde was a dominant force throughout the day, and is getting closer to the yellow jersey.

He finished second with a late burst ahead of Australian Cadel Evans on the climb to the finish, and is now second overall at 2:35.

Soler, meanwhile, was delighted with his first major win on the world's biggest race.

The Colombian put up a stunning display of solo riding after leaving Discovery Channel's Yaroslav Popovych a few kilometers before the summit of the Galibier. *AFP*

**OVERALL LEADER Michael Rasmussen (Rabobank/Ned) of Denmark looks backwards as he is followed by Spain's Alejandro Valverde (Caisse d'Epargne/Fra) and France's Christophe Moreau (AG2R/Fra) during the ninth stage of the 94th Tour de France.** AFP

# Seve ends charismatic golf career

**BALLESTEROS** AP

CARNOUSTIE, SCOTland—The Spanish eyes that came to life whenever Seve Ballesteros faced an impossible shot were soft and sad. The man who bounced on the balls of his feet when he won at St. Andrews sat calmly at a table to announce his career was over.

"I don't have the desire," Ballesteros said.

Ballesteros officially retired from golf on Monday, ending a charismatic run filled with spectacular shots that carried him to a record 50 victories on the European Tour, five major championships and a Ryder Cup career that helped Europe shed its underdog image.

He has not been a factor the last decade because of back injuries, rarely playing the last couple of years.

Ballesteros was the youngest Masters champion (23) until Tiger Woods came along, and he returned to Augusta National this year to give his career one last chance. He had rounds of 86-80 to finish in last place, then tried one Champions Tour event after turning 50 in April, but again came in last.

He said he would keep playing golf with his children, and his focus would be spent on his family and his business, which includes golf course design. His announcement follows television reports from Spain that he tried to commit suicide, which Ballesteros said "were not even close to reality."

He arranged to make the announcement at Carnoustie, where he made his British Open debut in 1975 and missed the cut.

Ballesteros won his first major in 1979 at Royal Lytham & St. Annes, then overwhelmed Augusta National a year later when he took a 10-shot lead into the back nine only to start hitting the ball everywhere. He settled for a four-shot victory, then added another green jacket in 1983 with a four-shot victory over Ben Crenshaw and Tom Kite, two of America's rising stars. *AP*

# Amonsot confident of beating Katsidis

**CZAR AMONSOT: Ready**

CZAR AMONSOT, BIDDING TO BECOME the third Filipino world ring champion this year, checked in at the Mandalay Bay in Las Vegas yesterday confident of his chances against Australian champion Michael Katsidis in their title clash this Sunday.

Katsidis, who arrived at the Mandalay Bay earlier in the day, and Amonsot battle it out for the WBA interim lightweight title in a 12-round war underneath the Bernard Hopkins-Winky Wright superbout, which will be telecast in on Sunday by ABS-CBN.

Amonsot of the ALA Boxing Gym was also visibly elated by the arrival of his manager Michael Aldeguer in Las Vegas, who was accompanied by top Filipino promoter Sammy Gello-ani.

In the morning, Amonsot did a light run for 35 minutes. He then sweated it out at the Vegas Boxing gym with Tagbilaran City Mayor Dan Neri Lim closely monitoring his workout.

The Filipino did 10 minutes on the skipping rope followed by four rounds of shadow boxing, three rounds of mitt work, and light abdominal exercises in what trainer Edito Villamor described as "maintenance training."

Villamor later announced that Amonsot was now just a pound over the 135-lb lightweight limit.

The duo was then invited to the residence of cutman Tony Martin in a gated community away from the Strip where they had dinner.

Amonsot hopes to duplicate the recent feats of new IBF minimumweight champion Florante Condes and IBF flyweight titlist Nonito Donaire.

"I ask the Filipino people to pray for my victory. I have done everything in the gym to prepare for this fight, and I will leave everything on that ring come fight night," said Amonsot. *Salven Lagumbay, Contributor*

# Air Relay rules MBT-Bayan tilt

AIR RELAY STRUCK HARD EPIXTAR IN THE last five minutes to beat Epixtar, 78-69, and rule the MBT Bayan Call Center League over the weekend at the RTU gym in Mandaluyong City.

With Reynante Ober, Wilfredo San Antonio and Nestor Turato at the helm, Scott Nagle's Air Relay outscored Epixtar, 20-11, in the payoff period to win the event backed by Bayan Telecommunications and Span, the mobiler landline phone.

Antonio, Turato and Ober combined for 43 points for Air Relay while Epixtar was led by the 19 points of Marzeron Barreiro.

Deposed champion TeleTech drubbed Pacifix Connexion, 82-51, to finish third.

Rosito Ocampo was later named MVP of the tournament in the event also supported by Mighty Filter Kings, Apo Floors, Basil 2000 Sportswear, Team Sparrow and Molten.

Bayan executives Dicky Liwanag and TJ Rosal graced the awarding rites along with Fernandez.

Call 6367638, text 09179948408, or visit their website: www.metrobasketball.net.

## SPORTSWATCH

### All In! All Green Part 2! poker tourney

LA SALLE IS INVITING ALL ALUMNI AND FRIENDS TO JOIN THE "ALL IN! ALL Green Part 2! Laking Verde!" Texas Hold-em Poker at the Pagcor Airport Casino. The top 12 players in the tournament set Aug. 11 will receive prizes like appliance showcase, hotel accommodations, gift certificates and other unique items. From 12, six players will meet at the final table to compete for non-cashable casino chips worth P200,000 donated by Pagcor, as well as Samsung digital prizes (DVD players and flat screen TV sets) and trophies. The non-cash event, which will only accept 100 participants 21-years and above, is presented by DLSU Batch '82, LSGH '78 and '93 and LSGH Archers '83 Foundation Inc., host for the LSGH Alumni Homecoming in 2008. Registration starts at 1 p.m. with a fee of P300. The buy-in is only P2,000. The game starts at 2:30 p.m. with free food and drinks courtesy of Pagcor. There will be unlimited re-buys until the fourth level and participants will be allowed to request for add-on once. Net proceeds will be for the LSGH Adult Night High School. For inquiries, call Malu at 632-4386688 or 0928-4606104.

### Foreign karters arrive for Asian Open

DELEGATES FROM EIGHT FOREIGN COUNTRIES ARRIVED YESTERDAY WITH high hopes of bringing home the titles at stake in the 2007 Shell Helix-Casino Filipino Kart Grand Prix–Asian Karting Open Championship kicking off tomorrow at the Carmona Circuit Philippines. Participants will have the chance to test drive their karts and adjust their set-ups in today's unofficial practice runs in time for tomorrow's qualifying round that will determine their grid positions. The first heat is scheduled on Saturday while the Pre-Final and the Final races are set on Sunday. Leading the cast of talented foreign drivers are Macau's Johnny Afonso and Mak Ka Lok and Japanese Shota Kitazono, who delivered impressive wins in the Macau kickoff leg last month. For details, call Rose Feria at 817-2241.

### Sevillano wins South California tilt

FILIPINO INTERNATIONAL MASTER ENRICO SEVILLANO DREW WITH UNITED States Master John Daniel Bryant in the final round to emerge overall champion in the just concluded 2007 Southern California Chess Federation (SCCF) State Championship in Los Angeles, California. Sevillano, a native of Cebu City and prodigy of sportsman/NM Matias Aznar, finished with 6.5 points, on six wins and a draw to capture the title in the eight-man field. Earlier, Sevillano settled for runner-up honors in the 47th Annual Pacific Southwest Open last June 29 to July 1 at the Burbank Airport Marriott Hotel. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

### SJC Rambulan last day of eliminations today

THE FIFTH AND LAST BATCH OF PARTICIPANTS PLUNGE INTO ACTION TODAY as the 228-entry Rambulan 6-cock derby takes place at the San Juan Coliseum beginning at 6 p.m. The 2-cock elimination round, backed by Sagupaan Complexor, will banner 50 fights. Two days of championship rounds are lined-up on July 21 and 24, according to pit manager Renato Shio. Participants with 1-1 (win-loss) scores must compete on July 21, while those with 1.5 and 2 points take on each other on July 24. The winners stand to receive a guaranteed prize of P3 million. Meanwhile, Cesar Sto. Domingo will host the Para Sa Masa 4-cock derby on July 26. The Super Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan with P500,000 up for grabs comes next on July 28. For inquiries: 725 -5369 and 0917 -8041691 (Maan or Maricar).

### Fastest Win event at LPC today

COCKERS FROM PARAÑAQUE, MUNTINLUPA, LAS PIÑAS, PASAY, LAGUNA and Cavite clash anew today in Las Piñas Coliseum's Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan at 1 p.m. Entries will be accepted from 8 a.m. to noon. The "bracket of five" format will be adopted, said hosts Benjie Castanares and Jeff Boyo, with the top three set to receive P5,000, P3,000 and P2,000, respectively. A 3-cock with P300,000 at stake follows on Saturday with the Kernel LPC group as host. Goerge Fajardo of Muntinlupa (July 27 Sa Binan) and Marlon de Castro of Batangas (DMC) topped the 3-cocker on July 24. Meanwhile, screening of stags in the LPC Annual 7-stag derby starts on the first week of August. Slated on Aug. 23 and 25, the event offers P1 million in guaranteed prize for an entry fee of P22,000. Call 873 -1040 and 0926-7450375 for info.

# NBC playoffs: Iloilo-Davao

DAVAO CITY—THE TOYOTA-ILOILO WARriors battle the fancied Montano Pawnshop-Davao cagers today at the start of the 2007 Spring Cooking Oil-NBC National Cup basketball playoffs at the Almendras gym here.

The Warriors were also the underdogs in the first conference playoffs last season but went all the way to the semifinals only to lose to the Pagadian Explorers after taking a 1-0 lead.

The Warriors of businessman Robert Uy and strong supporter Mayor Jerry Trenas hope to duplicate that showing when they face businessman Armando Quibod's Jewelers at 6:30 p.m.

"We'll take it one game at a time," said Uy. "I told (the boys) to just play their game and forget about the pressure."

Quibod is likewise confident of his boys' ability to move forward. The Jewelers won three of their last four games to end the eliminations with a 6-10 record in the tourney supported by Sulpicio Lines, Spring Cooking Oil, Yahoo Phils., San Miguel Beer, Caltex, Sun Cellular, Firefly Lightings, Trans Asia Shipping Lines, Molten, Nature's Spring, Basketball TV and Viva Prime Channel.

Iloilo and Montana split their two games with the Warriors winning the first, 84-79, and the Jewelers taking the second, 85-82, on Henry Fernandez's buzzer-beating triple.

The winner will face third-seeded Tagaytay Spring in the quarterfinals.

# Jao thumps Aguilar in Superbikes race

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—REIGNing titlist Jolet Jao of Shell Advance-Kawasaki survived the tough challenge from fellow motocross champ Glen Aguilar en route to a sweep in the third leg of the 2007 Shell Advance Superbikes Series recently at the Batangas Racing Circuit here.

Jao moves up to second place overall, 14 points behind pacesetter Maico Buncio of Yamaha in the Expert division of the event sanctioned by the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (NAMSSA).

Spectators were drawn by the showdown between Jao and Aguilar, who quickly got the holeshot in the morning race and controlled the tempo during the first six laps.

But Aguilar got stuck with a backmarker, pushing him to the sideline as Jao strolled ahead to wrest the lead on the seventh lap. From there, Jao started to pull away before completing the 10 laps in 17 minutes and 8.984 seconds or 19.591 seconds ahead of Aguilar.

Buncio finished third while Rod Chua and David Pua checked in fourth and fifth, respectively.

Aguilar again gained the head-start in Race 2 and held control until the fourth lap. Jao then made a decisive maneuver, smoothly taking the inside lane to slip past Aguilar at the backstretch and reached the finish line after 17 minutes and 18.534 seconds or 15.459 seconds ahead.

Pua came in third.

Aguilar went on to sweep the Novice crown over runner-up Gherry Chua and third placer Erwin Siep.

Simon Salenda likewise pulled a sweep in the 400 cc division over Barney Buncio and Merwin Estrella.

**YAMAHA'S Maico Buncio (in front), Glen Aguilar (in black suit) and Jolet Jao jockey for position in the Expert division of the 2007 Shell Advance Superbikes Series at the Batangas Racing Circuit. Jao won.**

# Mendoza notches Underbone sweep

ROSARIO, BATANGAS—BENJO MENDOZA posted a big sweep and seized the solo lead recently in the 2007 San Mig Coffee Philippine Underbone King Championship at the Batangas Racing Circuit.

Erstwhile leader Johnlery Enriquez figured in a collar bone injury during a pre-race accident, as both races in the premiere 150cc Sports Production class resulted in a close fight between Mendoza and Rizaldy Canare.

Mendoza barely escaped in Race 1, clocking 14:52.581 in the eight-lap race to slip past Canare by a mere 0.016 seconds. Iraq Bauzon bagged third place while Josh Reuben Tan and Randy Ortiz checked in fourth and fifth, respectively.

Canare tried to bounce back in Race 2, but his efforts fell short as Mendoza prevailed anew with a time of 16:24.865 or 0.095 seconds over Canare.

Bauzon again took third place while Randy Ortiz and younger brother Ralph checked in fourth and fifth, respectively.

Fil-Japanese Dashi Watanabe, 13 drew the loudest cheers with his convincing sweep in the 110cc Petron Superstock class.

Running at an average of 117.9 kph, Watanabe wrapped up the eight-lap race in 15 minutes, 3.845 seconds or 12 seconds ahead of Danny Daquigan and duplicated his feat in the afternoon with a time of 18:54.376 or 11.160 seconds ahead of Daquigan.

Anthony Roman came in third in both races while another 13-year-old rider James Barcial and Paul Mark Doblada ended fourth and fifth, respectively.

SPORTS

KENNEVIC Asucion fails to make it past the first round. ROMY HOMILLADA

# Asuncions march on

## But Kennevic crashes out in men's draw; upset rocks RP Open women's division

By Romina S. Austria

**SIBLINGS KENNEVIC AND KENNIE ASUNcion overpowered Portugal's Filipa Lamy and Alexandre Paixao, 21-13, 21-17, yesterday at the start of the Bingo Bonanza Philippine Badminton Open 2007 at the Philsports Arena.**

The impressive win came after Kennevic, the Philippines' lone singles entry, lost to unseeded Malaysian Yogendran Krishnan, 21-17, 21-14, in the men's singles of the $120,000 Grand Prix Gold event.

The Asuncions, runners-up last year, will meet the winner of the other mixed doubles match between Taiwan's Yu Chin Chien and Yu Hsin Hsieh and the No. 4 German pair of Katrin Piotrowski and Ingo Kindervater.

"We haven't played against the Germans yet. They're tall so we have to offset that advantage with quicker moves," said Kennie.

The Asuncions' conquerors in the 2006 edition, Sudket Prapakamol and Suralee Thoungthongkam, begged off this year but the siblings' other worries are Indon top seeds Lilyana Natsir and Nova Widianto and the No. 2 tandem of Vita Marissa and Flandy Limpele.

The 26-year old Asuncion said the competition is definitely tougher this year as the world's top shuttlers are eyeing top 20 slots to make it to the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

"I reached the round of 32 last year but this year, I could only do so much," said Asuncion, who had to go through three qualifying games Tuesday to make it to yesterday's main singles draw.

Other Filipinos still playing at press time were sisters Raquel and Rachel Guerrero against Malaysia's Sook Chin Chong and Amelia Alicia Anselly; Irene Chiu and Therine Thristie Chan against Chinese Tingting Zao and Wei Yang; and Kennie and Lili Wang of Indonesia versus Russia's Nina Vislova and Valeri Sorokina.

**MATCHES TODAY**
*(PhilSports Arena)*
8:30 a.m.— men's singles (2nd round)
2 p.m.—mixed doubles (Last 32)
3:30 p.m.—women's singles (Last 32)
5 p.m.—men's singles (3rd round)
6:30 p.m.—women's doubles (Last 32)
8 p.m.—men's doubles (Last 32)

### Big upset

The biggest upset on opening day was fashioned out by China's Zhu Jingjing, who sent out defending ladies singles champion Saina Nehwal of India, 21-15, 21-13.

As expected, men's singles top seed and world No. 2 Hong Chen of China, defending champion Hafiz Hashim of Malaysia and 2006 Asian Games gold medalist Taufik Hidayat of Indonesia easily advanced to the second round.

Among the men's seeds, only No. 12 Yen Hui Kendrick Lee of Singapore and No. 15 Yan Kit Chan of Hong Kong failed to make it past the opening round.

Chen beat Ajay Jayaram of India, 21-19, 21-17, while fifth seed and World No. 10 Hidayat, also the 2004 Athens Olympics winner, disposed of Iranian Kaveh Mehrabi, 21-13, 21-12, in only 23 minutes.

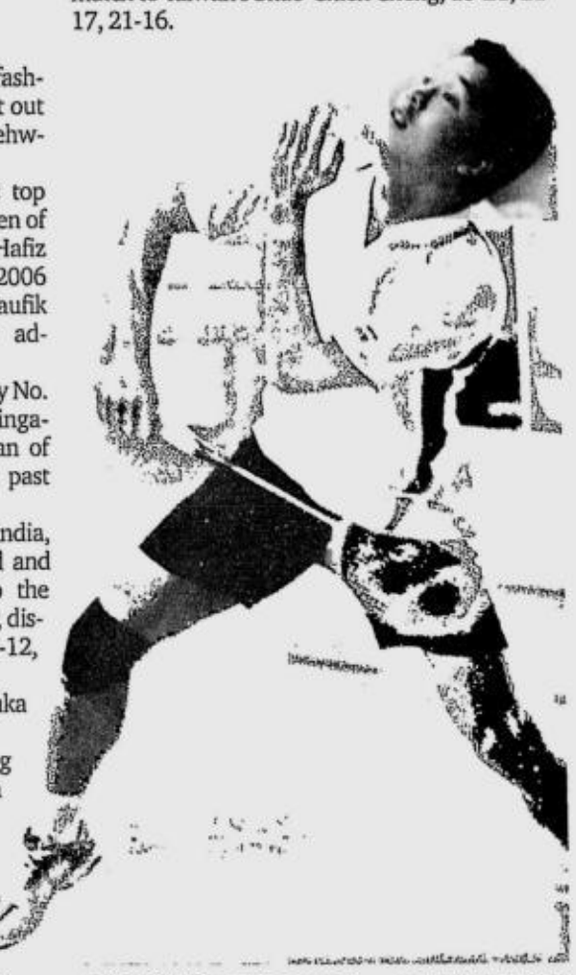
Hashim, the eighth seed, thrashed Luka Petric of Slovenia, 21-9, 21-14.

Lee yielded to Malaysia's Kwong Beng Chan, 20-22, 15-21, and Chan dropped a 15-21, 18-21 decision to China's Weijie Gong.

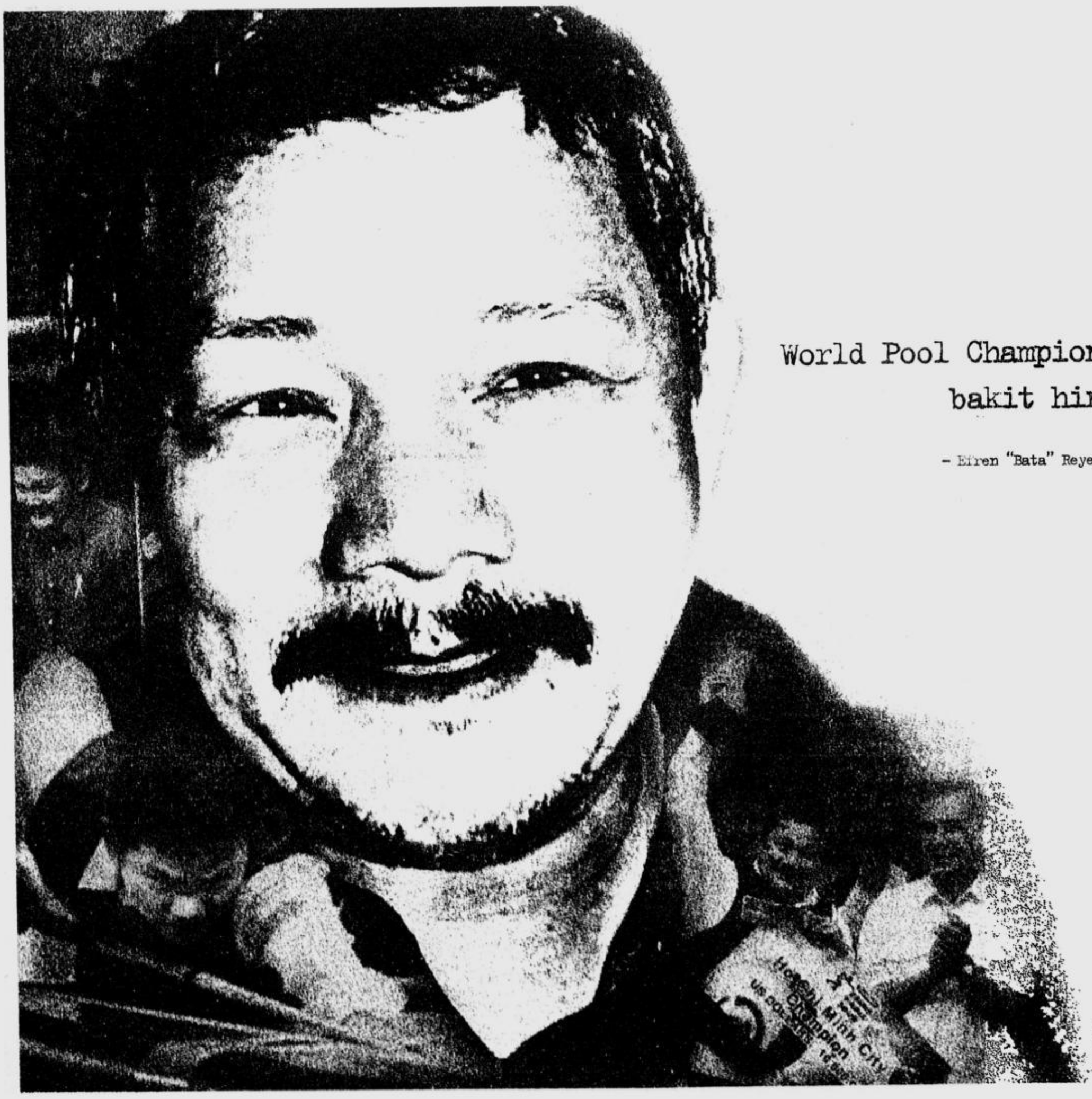
In the ladies draw, Japan's No. 4 Eriko Hirose of Japan won over Thailand's Soratja Chansrisukot, 21-11, 21-17, and compatriot Kaori Mori, the seventh seed, triumphed over Thai Salajakit Ponsana, 21-18, 21-18.

No. 5 seed Tine Rasmussen of Denmark and No. 8 Li Li of Singapore were not as lucky.

Rasmussen lost to Malaysia's Pei Xian Julia Wong, 12-21, 21-12, 19-21, while Li was no match to Taiwan's Shao-Chieh Cheng, 15-21, 21-17, 21-16.



HIDAYAT: Hardly a sweat. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO


World Pool Championship,
bakit hindi?

- Efren "Bata" Reyes

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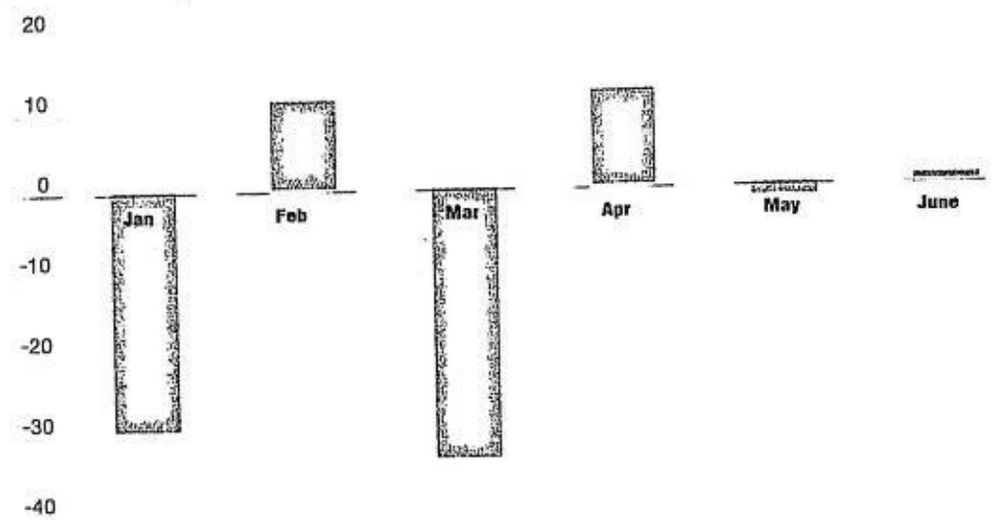
# Gov't overshoots budget deficit ceiling

**Monthly budget deficit/surplus**
First half 2007 (in billion pesos)




## January-June gap balloons to P41B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT INCURRED A P41-BILLION budget deficit in the first half, overshooting the P31.3-billion ceiling for the period, as taxes and duties collected by its main revenue earners fell short of expectations.

The deficit for January to June resulted from P510.3 billion in revenue collections and P551.3 billion in expenditures. The government finances the budget gap through borrowings.

The deficit for the first six months represented 65 percent of the P63-billion deficit ceiling set by finance officials for the entire year.

In June alone, the government registered a surplus of P800 million, but this was not enough to keep the deficit within the six-month official ceiling. Revenues for the month hit P77.7 billion, while expenditures reached 76.9 billion.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said that despite exceeding its deficit limit for the first six months, the government would still stick to its goal of keeping the full-year deficit to P63 billion, better than the P64.8 billion recorded last year.

Teves said the bureaus of internal revenue and of customs were tasked to implement measures to enhance the collection of taxes and duties, while finance officials were beefing up efforts to sell big-ticket, state-owned assets.

"In the succeeding months, the BIR and the BOC will pursue their action plans to meet their monthly targets and partially recover their shortfall in the first half. We will be complementing our intensified collection efforts with the privatization of government as-

GOV'T/ B3

## GMA to push tax exemption for minimum wage earners

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS EXpected to push for the reform of the income tax system, including exempting minimum-wage earners from the payment of income tax, when she delivers her State of the National Address on Monday.

The President has asked economic agencies of the government to give inputs to her Sona, and the Department of Finance suggested that the income tax reform be included in the President's legislative agenda for the 14th Congress.

Finance Undersecretary Gil Beltran said Ms Arroyo had agreed that there was a need to pass a bill that would reform the income tax system, especially the exemption of minimum wage earners from income tax.

The income tax reform was on the original agenda pushed by the Arroyo administration at the time the government was experiencing a serious fiscal problem in 2004.

But because of tedious legislative process, only three of several fiscal reform measures by the Arroyo administration were passed by Congress. These were the increase in excise tax rates on alcohol and cigarettes, the Lateral Attrition law and the Reformed Value-Added Tax law.

Beltran said that exempting minimum wage earners from the income tax would somehow relieve them of the burden caused by the expanded VAT law, which increased the tax rate to 12 percent from 10 percent and expanded the coverage of the tax to include electricity and oil, among others.

GMA/ B3

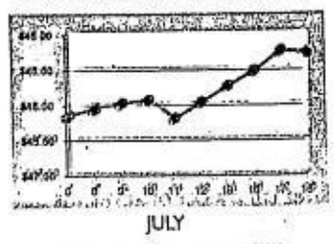
**IN THIS ISSUE**

Lopez holding firm buys P8.3B worth of Meralco shares /B2

New vehicle insurance system on hold /B8

**INDICATORS**

**CURRENCIES**



JULY

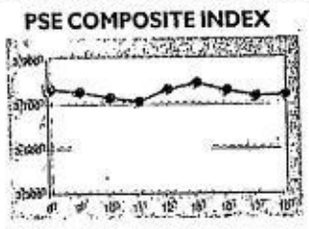
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱45.280 = $1

As of 5 p.m., July 18, 2007

**STOCK MARKET**

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



JULY

(See stock market report on Page B2)

### Shares close higher

SHARES CLOSED 0.14-PERCENT HIGHER YESterday as market heavyweight Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. snapped a two-day slide to boost market sentiment, dealers said.

The composite index finished up 5.12 points at 3,734.80, after moving in a narrow range of 3,723.86 to 3,746.53.

The all-share index rose 7.22 points to 2,414.70.

There were 73 gainers and 35 losers, while 65 stocks were unchanged. Turnover reached 3.8 billion shares worth P4.5 billion.

Investors were reluctant to build positions decisively, channeling their funds instead into

SHARES/ B3

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# Lopez holding firm buys P8.3B worth of Meralco shares

By Abigail L. Ho

FIRST PHILIPPINE HOLDINGS CORP, the holding company of the Lopez clan, has bought more than P8.3 billion worth of Manila Electric Co. shares.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, First Holdings chief information officer Ernesto Rufino Jr. said the company acquired all class "B" Meralco common shares held by the Meralco Pension Fund, as well as class "A" shares representing 6.6 percent of the distribution utility's issued and outstanding common stock.

Covered under First Holdings' purchase agreement with Meralco Pension Fund were 28.79 million "B" shares and 37.62 million "A" shares worth a total P8.3 billion.

The acquisition should be completed by year's end, Rufino said.

Meralco Pension Fund currently holds 8.8 percent or 88.55 million Meralco "A" and "B" shares.

PCD Nominee Corp. holds the bulk of the shares at 268.58 million shares or 26.69 percent of the total. First Philippine Union Fenosa Inc. holds another 230.08 million shares or 22.86 percent.

First Holdings, formerly known as Meralco Securities Corp., was established to group together the Lopez family's investments in the power sector.

It also has investments in property development, road infrastructure, construction, manufacturing and securities transfer services.

Seeking to become "the premiere energy company in the Philippines," the company spun off First Generation Corp. to manage the company's power-generation activities.

# Cute no more

**BREAKTIME**

*Conrado R. Banal III*

TO ME, FROM NOW ON, THIS ADministration is no longer cute.

Its leader that most of you (but not me) refer to as "GMA," is backing a move by the state firm Napocor for this monstrous monopoly to remain ... well, a "monopoly."

That will be the effect, ultimately, of the campaign by the so-called Napocor mafia to amend the Epira—the 6-year-old law for reforming the power sector.

From what heard, the mafia is gaining ground even with GMA, personally, to get rid of an important provision in the Epira.

And that is, well, for Napocor to sell 70 percent of its power generation plants!

Word in the electricity business has it that the Napocor mafia now wants GMA to badger Congress to lower the Epira figure to only 50 percent.

Now, this administration caught the attention of the entire investment world when, in 2001, during GMA's first year, she worked up Congress to pass the Epira.

It was something that two presidents before her failed to achieve, inspiring even foreign critics to hail the reform package as the Asian model for enhancing competition.

Today, at the same time, the Palace talks about the GMA administration's "legacy." I thought the Epira was one good start. Was I mistaken!

* * *

ONE REASON proffered for the mangling of Epira, coming from the Napocor mafia, is that the law does not work. Proof: Since its passage power rates have increased.

Look at that—just take a good look at that! The mafia is blaming the "reform package" for the rate increase!

The notorious gangsters in Napocor forget, quiet conveniently, that the increase had everything to do with the soaring prices of oil.

And so let me enlighten those liars: Fuel prices worldwide have gone up by almost 200 percent in the past few years.

Even with the 18-percent appreciation of the peso, that would be enough to push up power rates because fuel accounts for almost half of the power costs.

What I am saying here is that, because of the high cost of fuel, the power rates were bound to go up—with or without Epira.

How difficult was that to comprehend for guys who have been in the electricity business all their working lives?

* * *

OF COURSE the power rates also went up due to the reported "price manipulation" at the WESM, or the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market, a main item in the reform package.

Napocor and another state firm called PSALM, in reality, still accounted for between 80 and 90 percent of the electricity available in the spot market.

What do you know—the Energy Regulatory Commission (the ERC itself) accused Napocor president Cyril del Callar of "collusion" to fix the WESM prices.

It seems that ERC got hold of what its commissioners referred to as Del Callar's "inappropriate and irregular" letter to his colleagues at PSALM, virtually inviting them to set the prices at WESM.

Del Callar wrote PSALM twice about "the staggering losses" incurred by Napocor and PSALM in the first two months of the WESM.

He then proposed to PSALM "the adoption of certain policies, some of them affecting how offers should be made by the PSALM trading teams."

Now, the ERC did not find any fault in PSALM, but it called Napocor's actions "highly inappropriate and irregular."

The commission issued a warning against Napocor "to refrain from such conduct that is inimical to the objectives of free competition."

That's when rumors started to circulate that GMA would no longer wait for Del Callar to resign. She would simply axe him immediately.

He is still there, mind you.

* * *

EPIRA is clear on the need to rid Napocor of its monopolistic dominance, which is the prerequisite of an open, competitive electricity market.

And now the mafia wants to do away with that particular Epira provision. Meaning, really, that Napocor should remain a monopoly.

If that happens, one thing is clear: Foreign investors, now preparing to buy Napocor plants up for privatization, will run away from this country fast.

The bad news is, we have an impending power crisis already, which we cannot hope to prevent without foreign investments in the sector.

Which, on the other hand, is like music to the Napocor mafia's ears, since under Epira (Section 71, I think), Napocor can then do another round of IPP contracts.

Those are expensive contracts—some rush, our-back-to-the-wall deals done during the 11-hour brownout days under the administration of former President Fidel Ramos.

Thus, the scenario does not change: Napocor dominates the business, it continues to incur losses, and we, the taxpayers, must subsidize it with our hard-earned money.

That's the legacy the Palace is talking about?

* * *

REGARDING that reported "smuggling" of power generators, we received a number of calls.

One is from Trade and Industry Secretary Peter Favila, who said that he received information that the importing group, supposedly with connections in Iran, even threatened to elevate the matter to an issue between the Republic of the Philippines and the government of Iran.

Favila commented: "I think the Iranian government understands why we want to stop illegal activities such as smuggling in this country."

Amen!

But the thing is, boss-mayor Pete, word goes around that the "smuggling" had the blessing of some powerful figures in the administration.

It seems that the customs broker that handled the shipment is closely related to somebody big at the Department of Finance. Watch your back, Gary!

# Atlas eyes listing in London

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

PUBLICLY LISTED ATLAS CONSOLIDATED Mining and Development Corp. is considering listing on the London Stock Exchange, one of the biggest stock markets in the world, to raise funds to expand its copper and nickel production.

Atlas Mining chair Alfredo Ramos said the company might issue new shares and raise at least $100 million to catch the eye of investors. The final issue size has yet to be set.

"London is now the world's center for mining stocks, so it's logical to go there. (About) $100 million is a minimum, you have to be big and have a lot of projects to catch investors' attention overseas," Ramos said.

Atlas chief financial officer Martin Buckingham said proceeds from the possible foreign listing could be used to expand the firm's copper and nickel operations. Copper production of subsidiary Carmen Copper Corp., which will start shipment by the second quarter of 2008, is seen to hit initially 20,000 tons a year.

"The long-term objective is to raise production to 150,000 tons a year of copper ore," Buckingham said.

Other stock markets also being considered aside from the London Stock Exchange included the Toronto Stock Exchange and the Australian Stock Exchange. Atlas has yet to make a final decision on which foreign market to list.

Carmen Copper, which operates in Toledo, Cebu, was closed in 1994 but is now being rehabilitated to produce copper concentrates by the second quarter of next year.

The Toledo copper complex was one of the biggest copper producers in Asia from 1955 until the suspension of its operations in 1994.

The Carmen mine has 874 million metric tons of ore with an average grade of 0.41 percent copper or 5.4 million tons of contained copper.

The average annual output will hit 47,000 tons of copper, 41,000 ounces of gold and other mineral concentrates.

To complete its rehabilitation, Ramos said Carmen needed $150 million to $200 million, with Atlas raising $100 million from a long-term loan with Deutsche Bank AG and $40 million from Crescent Asian Special Opportunities Portfolio Fund.

Atlas' other subsidiary, Berong Nickel Corp. (BNC), completed its eighth shipment of nickel ore to China.

The combined nickel resources of BNC in Palawan have been estimated at 275 million dry metric tons with an average grade of 1.3 percent nickel. It is projected that this year, direct shipment of ore will reach a million tons and grow to 9 million tons over the next two to three years with new mine developments.

## CURRENCIES

| July 18, 2007 Country | Unit | Euro Equivalent | Dollar Equivalent | Peso Equivalent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| United States | Dollar | 0.725742 | 1.000000 | 45.3170 |
| Japan | Yen | 0.005931 | 0.008173 | 0.3704 |
| United Kingdom | Pound | 1.484868 | 2.046000 | 92.7186 |
| Hong Kong | Dollar | 0.092809 | 0.127881 | 5.7952 |
| Switzerland | Franc | 0.603126 | 0.831048 | 37.6606 |
| Canada | Dollar | 0.695555 | 0.958405 | 43.4320 |
| Singapore | Dollar | 0.478217 | 0.658935 | 29.8610 |
| Australia | Dollar | 0.633780 | 0.873286 | 39.5747 |
| Bahrain | Dinar* | 1.925198 | 2.652731 | 120.2138 |
| Saudi Arabia | Rial | 0.193521 | 0.266652 | 12.0839 |
| Brunei | Dollar | 0.476646 | 0.656771 | 29.7629 |
| Indonesia | Rupiah | 0.000080 | 0.000110 | 0.0050 |
| Thailand | Baht | 0.024031 | 0.033113 | 1.5006 |
| UAE | Dirham | 0.197599 | 0.272272 | 12.3386 |
| EU | Euro | 1.000000 | 1.377900 | 62.4423 |
| Korea | Won | 0.000791 | 0.001090 | 0.0494 |
| China | Yuan** | 0.095961 | 0.132224 | 5.9920 |
| Argentina | Peso | 0.233922 | 0.322321 | 14.6066 |
| Brazil | Real | 0.388930 | 0.535906 | 24.2857 |
| Denmark | Kroner | 0.134417 | 0.185213 | 8.3933 |
| India | Rupee | 0.018040 | 0.024857 | 1.1264 |
| Malaysia | Ringgit | 0.210787 | 0.290444 | 13.1621 |
| Mexico | New Peso | 0.067558 | 0.093088 | 4.2185 |
| New Zealand | Dollar | 0.574072 | 0.791014 | 35.8464 |
| Norway | Kroner | 0.126694 | 0.174572 | 7.9111 |
| Pakistan | Rupee | 0.012010 | 0.016548 | 0.7499 |
| South Africa | Rand | 0.104604 | 0.144134 | 6.5317 |
| Sweden | Kroner | 0.109152 | 0.150401 | 6.8157 |
| Syria | Pound | 0.014037 | 0.019342 | 0.8765 |
| Taiwan | Nt Dollar | 0.022110 | 0.030466 | 1.3806 |
| Venezuela | Bolivar | 0.000338 | 0.000466 | 0.0211 |

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—July 17, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of July 17, 2007

## PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of July 18, 2007)

| 52-WEEK HIGH | 52-WEEK LOW | STOCK | OPEN | HIGH | LOW | CLOSE | VOLUME |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | BANKS | | | | | |
| 17.5 | 5.2 | Asiatrust Development Bank Inc. | 11.5 | 11.75 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 178,400 |
| 73 | 30.5 | Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc. | 70 | 71 | 70 | 71 | 603,200 |
| 73.5 | 48.5 | Bank of the Philippine Islands | 69.5 | 70 | 69 | 69.5 | 3,283,900 |
| 935 | 630 | China Banking Corp. | 890 | 890 | 890 | 890 | 700 |
| 20.25 | 18.18 | Citystate Savings Bank | 20.25 | 20.25 | 20.25 | 20.25 | 300 |
| 0.63 | 0.37 | Export and Industry Bank Inc | 0.54 | 0.55 | 0.53 | 0.54 | 6,160,000 |
| 75.5 | 34.5 | Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co. | 70.5 | 71 | 70 | 70 | 1,501,200 |
| 68 | 38.5 | Philippine Savings Bank | 64 | 64 | 64 | 64 | 2,000 |
| 39.57 | 14.13 | Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. | 35.5 | 36 | 35.5 | 36 | 843,700 |
| 90 | 46 | Security Bank Corp. | 86 | 86 | 85 | 85.5 | 264,300 |
| 66 | 41.54 | Union Bank of the Philippines | 62.5 | 62.5 | 62 | 62.5 | 789,900 |
| | | OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS | | | | | |
| 5.6 | 1.72 | ATR KimEng Financial Corp. | 4.95 | 5.1 | 4.95 | 5.1 | 596,000 |
| 1.5 | 0.6 | Bankard Inc. | 1.22 | 1.22 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 175,000 |
| 16.25 | 1.68 | CitisecOnline.com Inc. | 14.75 | 14.75 | 14.25 | 14.75 | 505,200 |
| 8.8 | 3.9 | Filipino Fund Inc. | 8.4 | 8.5 | 8.4 | 8.4 | 46,000 |
| 1.6 | 0.4 | First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp. | 1.12 | 1.14 | 1.1 | 1.14 | 685,000 |
| 42 | 28 | First Metro Investment Corp. | 42 | 42 | 42 | 42 | 10,000 |
| 1,710.00 | 1,500.00 | Manulife Financial Corp. | 1,710.00 | 1,710.00 | 1,710.00 | 1,710.00 | 1,180 |
| 5 | 4.05 | National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils. | 4.35 | 4.45 | 4.35 | 4.35 | 8,057,000 |
| 3.1 | 0.99 | PCI Leasing and Finance Inc. | 2.6 | 2.65 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 80,000 |
| 1,005.00 | 211 | The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc | 840 | 855 | 840 | 855 | 34,840 |
| 2,250.00 | 1,895.00 | Sun Life Financial Inc. | 2,195.00 | 2,205.00 | 2,195.00 | 2,205.00 | 1,760 |
| 1.94 | 1.24 | Vantage Corp | 1.82 | 1.82 | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1,345,000 |
| | | ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER | | | | | |
| 6.2 | 5.5 | Aboitiz Power Corp. | 5.6 | 5.8 | 5.5 | 5.6 | 38,920,000 |
| 0.57 | 0.22 | East Asia Power Resources Corp. | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.46 | 0.46 | 3,500,000 |
| 69.5 | 41.5 | First Gen Corp. | 69 | 69.5 | 69 | 69 | 48,100 |
| 92 | 41 | First Phil. Holdings Corp. | 89 | 89.5 | 88.5 | 89 | 852,500 |
| 15 | 7.5 | Manila Water Co. Inc. | 15 | 15 | 14.5 | 14.75 | 8,061,900 |
| 116 | 14.75 | Manila Electric Co. "A" | 103 | 107 | 103 | 103 | 172,670 |
| 118 | 23.5 | Manila Electric Co. "B" | 105 | 107 | 103 | 103 | 1,259,060 |
| 6.8 | 4.1 | PNOC Energy Development Corp. | 6.5 | 6.6 | 6.4 | 6.5 | 47,999,000 |
| 6.5 | 3.75 | Petron Corp. | 6.2 | 6.4 | 6.2 | 6.4 | 12,628,000 |
| 14.75 | 12 | Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc. | 12.25 | 12.75 | 12.25 | 12.25 | 845,300 |
| 2.5 | 1.6 | Salcon Power Corp. | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 200,000 |
| 1.9 | 0.91 | Trans-Asia Oil & Energy Dev't Corp. | 1.5 | 1.52 | 1.48 | 1.5 | 1,374,000 |
| | | FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO | | | | | |
| 6.3 | 2.85 | Alaska Milk Corp. | 5.8 | 5.8 | 5.8 | 5.8 | 1,000 |
| 2.95 | 1.88 | Alliance Tuna International Inc. | 2.22 | 2.24 | 2.2 | 2.2 | 250,000 |
| 2.75 | 1.24 | CADP Group Corp. | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 2.1 | 1,000 |
| 28.5 | 19.5 | Ginebra San Miguel Inc. | 25.5 | 26.5 | 25.5 | 26.5 | 32,000 |
| 61 | 30.5 | Jollibee Foods Corp. | 53.5 | 53.5 | 53 | 53.5 | 519,400 |
| 1.9 | 0.77 | RFM Corp. | 1.76 | 1.78 | 1.72 | 1.76 | 457,000 |
| 4.05 | 2.2 | Roxas Holdings | 2.7 | 2.7 | 2.55 | 2.55 | 955,000 |
| 80 | 61 | San Miguel Corp. "A" | 75 | 75 | 74 | 74 | 133,800 |
| 88 | 69.5 | San Miguel Corp. "B" | 81.5 | 82.5 | 80.5 | 82.5 | 81,300 |
| 0.61 | 0.2 | Swift Foods Inc. | 0.53 | 0.56 | 0.53 | 0.56 | 2,800,000 |
| 22 | 15.25 | Universal Robina Corp. | 17.5 | 17.75 | 17.5 | 17.75 | 74,500 |
| 0.55 | 0.19 | Vitarich Corp. | 0.43 | 0.43 | 0.42 | 0.43 | 840,000 |
| | | CONSTRUCTION INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES | | | | | |
| 6.1 | 1.45 | EEI Corp. | 5.5 | 5.8 | 5.5 | 5.8 | 1,305,000 |
| 15 | 6 | Federal Chemicals Inc. | 14 | 15 | 14 | 15 | 2,000 |
| 4.6 | 1.06 | Fortune Cement Corp. | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 27,000 |
| 9.2 | 4.3 | Holcim Philippines Inc. | 8 | 8 | 7.9 | 8 | 1,590,000 |
| 7 | 1.2 | Republic Cement Corp. | 4.95 | 5 | 4.95 | 5 | 694,000 |
| 2 | 0.25 | Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc. | 1.64 | 1.68 | 1.64 | 1.68 | 342,000 |
| | | CHEMICALS | | | | | |
| 6.3 | 1.42 | Chemrez Technologies Inc. | 5.5 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.6 | 3,148,000 |
| 1.34 | 0.8 | Interphil Laboratories Inc. "A" | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 1.02 | 50,000 |
| 1.4 | 0.61 | Interphil Laboratories Inc. "B" | 0.85 | 1.02 | 0.85 | 1.02 | 90,000 |
| 1.46 | 0.51 | Mabuhay Vinyl Corp. | 1.2 | 1.26 | 1.2 | 1.24 | 150,000 |
| | | DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS | | | | | |
| 0.75 | 0.0675 | Pryce Resources Inc. | 0.63 | 0.75 | 0.63 | 0.69 | 679,660,000 |
| | | HOLDING FIRMS | | | | | |
| 3.9 | 1.8 | A. Soriano Corp. | 3.65 | 3.65 | 3.65 | 3.65 | 185,000 |
| 0.17 | 0.023 | AJO.net Holdings Inc. | 0.135 | 0.155 | 0.13 | 0.14 | 422,960,000 |
| 1.28 | 0.195 | APC Group Inc. | 1.06 | 1.1 | 1.06 | 1.06 | 12,949,000 |
| 3.6 | 1.4 | ATN Holdings Inc. "A" | 2.65 | 2.65 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 1,459,000 |
| 3.3 | 1.48 | ATN Holdings Inc. "B" | 2.85 | 2.85 | 2.7 | 2.75 | 56,000 |
| 0.018 | 0.0065 | Abacus Cons. Res. & Hold'gs Inc. "A" | 0.013 | 0.014 | 0.013 | 0.013 | 288,600,000 |
| 9.7 | 4.85 | Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc. | 8.3 | 8.3 | 8.2 | 8.3 | 3,034,000 |
| 0.021 | 0.007 | Alcorn Gold Resources Corp. | 0.017 | 0.017 | 0.017 | 0.017 | 11,200,000 |
| 7.3 | 3.5 | Alliance Global Group Inc. | 6 | 6.1 | 6 | 6.1 | 11,301,000 |
| 1.38 | 0.48 | Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc. | 1 | 1.02 | 0.99 | 1 | 794,000 |
| 2.9 | 0.89 | Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp. | 2.46 | 2.48 | 2.46 | 2.48 | 2,057,000 |
| 8 | 0.8 | Aries Prime Resources Inc. | 6 | 6.4 | 6 | 6.3 | 28,000 |
| 590 | 316.67 | Ayala Corp. | 560 | 570 | 560 | 565 | 182,590 |
| 14.5 | 6.96 | Bacnotan Consolidated Industries Inc. | 13.5 | 13.75 | 13.5 | 13.75 | 5,500 |
| 6.9 | 0.7 | Batabac Resources & Holdings Co. Inc. | 4.55 | 4.75 | 4.55 | 4.55 | 595,000 |
| 5.8 | 1.04 | Benpres Holdings Corp. | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.6 | 4,093,000 |
| 10.25 | 3.25 | DMCI Holdings Inc. | 9.6 | 9.6 | 9.4 | 9.5 | 1,177,000 |
| 2.02 | 0.7 | F and J Prince Holdings Corp. "A" | 1.84 | 1.94 | 1.82 | 1.9 | 325,000 |
| 8 | 2.55 | Filinvest Development Corp. | 7.4 | 7.5 | 7.4 | 7.5 | 102,000 |
| 3.55 | 1.16 | House of Investments Inc. | 2.75 | 2.75 | 2.75 | 2.75 | 383,000 |
| 14.5 | 5.6 | JG Summit Holdings Inc. | 12.25 | 12.5 | 12.25 | 12.5 | 4,000 |
| 5.9 | 0.61 | Jolliville Holdings Corp. | 4.6 | 5.9 | 4.6 | 4.9 | 9,041,000 |
| 0.8 | 0.185 | Medco Holdings Inc. | 0.6 | 0.68 | 0.6 | 0.62 | 2,120,000 |
| 0.95 | 0.13 | Mabuhay Holdings Corp. | 0.78 | 0.78 | 0.73 | 0.73 | 60,000 |
| 11.5 | 0.26 | Multitech Investments Corp. | 8.3 | 8.5 | 8.2 | 8.2 | 2,616,000 |
| 30 | 0.88 | NIHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc. | 25 | 25 | 24.25 | 24.5 | 227,500 |
| 5.4 | 1.3 | PAL Holdings Inc. | 5.2 | 5.2 | 5 | 5 | 641,000 |
| 0.75 | 0.16 | Prime Orion Philippines Inc. | 0.56 | 0.58 | 0.56 | 0.56 | 2,880,000 |
| 452.5 | 202.36 | SM Investments Corp. | 430 | 435 | 430 | 432.5 | 254,070 |
| 2.2 | 0.71 | Seafront Resources Corp. | 1.54 | 1.54 | 1.52 | 1.54 | 223,000 |
| 0.73 | 0.115 | Sinophil Corp. | 0.52 | 0.56 | 0.51 | 0.54 | 53,410,000 |
| 1.06 | 0.51 | Solid Group Inc. | 0.87 | 0.88 | 0.87 | 0.87 | 560,000 |
| 1.6 | 0.78 | South China Resources Inc. | 1.34 | 1.36 | 1.34 | 1.36 | 70,000 |
| 2 | 0.8 | Vivant Corp. | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 20,000 |
| 0.75 | 0.085 | Wellex Industries Inc. | 0.51 | 0.56 | 0.5 | 0.55 | 13,220,000 |
| 1.1 | 0.155 | Zeus Holdings Inc. | 0.74 | 0.74 | 0.73 | 0.73 | 170,000 |
| | | PROPERTY | | | | | |
| 2.16 | 0.78 | A Brown Co. Inc. | 1.74 | 1.76 | 1.74 | 1.76 | 220,000 |
| 1.06 | 0.3 | Araneta Properties Inc. | 0.79 | 0.8 | 0.79 | 0.8 | 420,000 |
| 19.25 | 10 | Ayala Land Inc. | 17.75 | 18.5 | 17.75 | 18 | 14,410,200 |
| 1.88 | 0.99 | Belle Corp. | 1.6 | 1.6 | 1.58 | 1.58 | 5,476,000 |
| 4.7 | 2.1 | Cebu Holdings Inc. | 4.3 | 4.45 | 4.25 | 4.45 | 544,000 |
| 0.86 | 0.26 | Crown Equities Inc. | 0.8 | 0.8 | 0.79 | 0.79 | 3,300,000 |
| 0.83 | 0.18 | Cyber Bay Corp. | 0.55 | 0.6 | 0.55 | 0.58 | 14,330,000 |
| 3.25 | 0.75 | Edsa Properties Holdings Inc. | 3.1 | 3.15 | 3.1 | 3.15 | 189,000 |
| 0.99 | 0.44 | Empire East Land Holdings Inc. | 0.84 | 0.85 | 0.84 | 0.85 | 8,970,000 |
| 0.42 | 0.038 | Ever Gotesco Resources & Hold'gs Inc. | 0.28 | 0.42 | 0.28 | 0.39 | 307,990,000 |
| 1.38 | 0.38 | Fil-Estate Land Inc. | 1.1 | 1.18 | 1.1 | 1.12 | 14,558,000 |
| 2.44 | 1.02 | Filinvest Land Inc. | 2.16 | 2.18 | 2.16 | 2.16 | 57,668,000 |
| 0.49 | 0.07 | Gotesco Land Inc. "A" | 0.33 | 0.49 | 0.33 | 0.43 | 35,690,000 |
| 0.5 | 0.07 | Gotesco Land Inc. "B" | 0.35 | 0.5 | 0.35 | 0.43 | 12,820,000 |
| 3.3 | 2.16 | Highlands Prime Inc. | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 20,000 |
| 0.69 | 0.2 | Kuok Phil. Properties Inc. | 0.45 | 0.47 | 0.45 | 0.47 | 6,700,000 |
| 1.12 | 0.18 | MRC Allied Industries Inc. | 0.94 | 0.95 | 0.91 | 0.92 | 2,150,000 |
| 4.4 | 1.28 | Megaworld Corp. | 3.95 | 4.05 | 3.95 | 4 | 25,641,000 |
| 6.4 | 1.5 | Metro Pacific Investments Corp. | 4.25 | 4.3 | 4.2 | 4.2 | 134,000 |
| 0.7 | 0.11 | Phil. Estates Corp. | 0.48 | 0.53 | 0.47 | 0.5 | 5,250,000 |
| 0.87 | 0.25 | Philippine Realty & Holdings Corp. | 0.68 | 0.68 | 0.65 | 0.66 | 10,850,000 |
| 9.2 | 1.1 | Polar Property Holdings Corp. | 6.3 | 6.4 | 6.3 | 6.3 | 109,000 |
| 23 | 10.5 | Robinson Land Corp. | 20 | 20.25 | 20 | 20.25 | 4,598,700 |
| 5.8 | 1.25 | SM Development Corp. | 5.7 | 5.8 | 5.6 | 5.8 | 1,287,000 |
| 13.5 | 5.92 | SM Prime Holdings Inc. | 13.25 | 13.25 | 13 | 13 | 3,901,300 |
| 1.34 | 0.51 | Suntrust Home Developers Inc. | 0.99 | 1.12 | 0.98 | 1.02 | 32,850,000 |
| 0.42 | 0.06 | Uniwide Holdings Inc. | 0.28 | 0.42 | 0.28 | 0.41 | 157,710,000 |
| | | MEDIA | | | | | |
| 37.5 | 15.75 | ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. | 37 | 37.5 | 37 | 37.5 | 140,400 |
| 1.14 | 0.98 | Manila Bulletin Publishing Corp. | 1.08 | 1.08 | 1.08 | 1.08 | 25,000 |
| | | TELECOMMUNICATIONS | | | | | |
| 2.12 | 1.16 | Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc. | 1.52 | 1.54 | 1.52 | 1.54 | 6,819,000 |
| 1,445.00 | 900 | Globe Telecom Inc. | 1,360.00 | 1,375.00 | 1,360.00 | 1,370.00 | 61,210 |
| 2,820.00 | 1,805.00 | Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co. | 2,700.00 | 2,710.00 | 2,700.00 | 2,705.00 | 118,750 |
| 7.9 | 3.25 | Pilipino Telephone Corp. | 7.2 | 7.3 | 7 | 7.3 | 1,281,000 |
| | | INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY | | | | | |
| 0.39 | 0.17 | Boulevard Holdings Inc. | 0.28 | 0.3 | 0.28 | 0.29 | 49,750,000 |
| 12 | 2 | Diversified Financial Network Inc. | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 91,000 |
| 10.5 | 2 | IPVG Corp. | 9.5 | 9.7 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 1,535,000 |
| 0.065 | 0.028 | ISM Communications Corp. | 0.049 | 0.049 | 0.048 | 0.049 | 29,900,000 |
| 2.9 | 1.8 | Ionics Inc. | 2.24 | 2.28 | 2.2 | 2.26 | 356,000 |
| 0.32 | 0.04 | Island Information & Technology Inc. | 0.27 | 0.29 | 0.25 | 0.26 | 142,730,000 |
| 0.0725 | 0.027 | PhilWeb.Com Inc. | 0.06 | 0.06 | 0.0575 | 0.06 | 47,100,000 |
| 5.8 | 1 | Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc. | 2.75 | 2.75 | 2.6 | 2.7 | 1,760,000 |
| | | TRANSPORTATION SERVICES | | | | | |
| 1.92 | 1.14 | Aboitiz Transport System Corp. | 1.72 | 1.72 | 1.72 | 1.72 | 1,000 |
| 6.8 | 2.5 | Asian Terminals Inc. | 5.6 | 5.6 | 5.5 | 5.5 | 299,000 |
| 34.5 | 14 | Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc. | 34.5 | 34.5 | 33.5 | 33.5 | 2,552,300 |
| 2.14 | 0.86 | Keppel Philippines Marine Inc. | 2.08 | 2.08 | 2.08 | 2.08 | 101,000 |
| 2.04 | 0.8 | Lorenzo Shipping Corp. | 1.54 | 1.54 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 49,000 |
| | | HOTEL & LEISURE | | | | | |
| 4.25 | 1.28 | Leisure and Resorts World Corp. | 3.55 | 3.6 | 3.55 | 3.6 | 801,000 |
| 0.98 | 0.18 | Premiere Entertainment Prod Inc. | 0.76 | 0.8 | 0.76 | 0.77 | 1,880,000 |
| 1.2 | 0.42 | Waterfront Philippines Inc. | 0.93 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 0.93 | 470,000 |
| | | EDUCATION | | | | | |
| 986.67 | 650 | Far Eastern University, Inc. | 850 | 850 | 850 | 850 | 10 |
| | | DIVERSIFIED SERVICES | | | | | |
| 41 | 6.6 | JTH Davies Holdings Inc. | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 3,000 |
| 6 | 1.9 | Macroasia Corp. | 5.4 | 5.4 | 5.2 | 5.3 | 482,000 |
| 17.25 | 13 | Pacific Online Systems Corp. | 14.25 | 14.5 | 14 | 14.25 | 606,300 |
| 30 | 9.9 | Paxys Inc. | 23 | 23.5 | 23 | 23.5 | 92,500 |
| | | MINING | | | | | |
| 0.018 | 0.0075 | Abra Mining and Industrial Corp. | 0.014 | 0.014 | 0.013 | 0.013 | 116,700,000 |
| 7.6 | 3.4 | Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A" | 5.4 | 5.6 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 231,000 |
| 7.7 | 3.4 | Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B" | 5.6 | 5.7 | 5.6 | 5.7 | 142,000 |
| 21.25 | 7.5 | Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp. | 15 | 16.25 | 15 | 16 | 8,244,200 |
| 14.25 | 8.7 | Benguet Corp. "A" | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 50,000 |
| 5 | 1.76 | Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc. | 4.05 | 4.05 | 4 | 4 | 68,000 |
| 3.1 | 0.0713 | Geograce Resources Philippines Inc. | 2.85 | 2.9 | 2.8 | 2.85 | 11,376,000 |
| 0.35 | 0.215 | Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A" | 0.28 | 0.29 | 0.28 | 0.29 | 3,010,000 |
| 0.42 | 0.225 | Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B" | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.32 | 0.32 | 2,100,000 |
| 0.038 | 0.017 | Manila Mining Corp. "A" | 0.031 | 0.031 | 0.03 | 0.031 | 151,700,000 |
| 0.041 | 0.019 | Manila Mining Corp. "B" | 0.032 | 0.033 | 0.032 | 0.032 | 25,400,000 |
| 0.024 | 0.008 | Omico Corp. | 0.02 | 0.02 | 0.019 | 0.02 | 518,500,000 |
| 6.4 | 3.15 | Philex Mining Corp. | 5.7 | 5.8 | 5.6 | 5.8 | 10,331,000 |
| 43 | 14.75 | Semirara Mining Corp. | 39 | 39 | 37 | 37.5 | 379,200 |
| 1.36 | 0.35 | United Paragon Mining Corp. | 1.06 | 1.08 | 1.04 | 1.08 | 3,265,000 |
| 1.8 | 0.52 | Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp. | 1.38 | 1.38 | 1.36 | 1.38 | 1,708,000 |
| | | OIL | | | | | |
| 0.58 | 0.25 | Basic Petroleum Corp. | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.48 | 0.48 | 3,780,000 |
| 0.025 | 0.0095 | Oriental Pet. & Minerals Corp. "A" | 0.022 | 0.023 | 0.022 | 0.023 | 64,800,000 |
| 0.027 | 0.01 | Oriental Pet. & Minerals Corp. "B" | 0.023 | 0.023 | 0.023 | 0.023 | 96,100,000 |
| 14.25 | 9 | Petroenergy Resources Corp. | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 10.5 | 105,100 |
| 0.028 | 0.0089 | The Philodrill Corp. | 0.023 | 0.024 | 0.023 | 0.023 | 94,800,000 |

| AVERAGES | | | VOLUME | VALUE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Financial | 995.58 UP | 1.61 | 25,164,580 | 570,466,790 |
| Industrial | 5142.19 DOWN | 4.16 | 809,063,530 | 1,535,650,705 |
| Holding Firms | 2240.68 UP | 16.01 | 847,002,660 | 553,379,560 |
| Property | 1839.22 DOWN | 5.2 | 727,786,200 | 931,146,685 |
| Service | 1646.72 UP | 6.29 | 289,004,470 | 614,271,685 |
| Mining & Oil | 6805.6 UP | 97.91 | 1,112,789,500 | 270,877,745 |
| All Shares Index | 2414.7 UP | 7.22 | | |
| PSEI | 3734.8 UP | 5.12 | | |
| | GRAND TOTALS | | 3,810,810,940 | 4,475,793,170 |

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO INQUIRER RESEARCH

SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

# Neda chief pushes more spending for infra projects

AYALA Corp. chair and CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala talks to Washington Sycip during the CSR Expo 2007 of the League of Corporate Foundations at Sofitel Plaza Hotel, Pasay City. RUDY ESPERAS

## RP continues to lag neighbors

By Michelle V. Remo

DESPITE THE ANEMIC TAX COLLECTION IN the first half, the National Economic and Development Authority said this should not be made an excuse to compromise the government's infrastructure-development agenda.

Neda Director General Romulo Neri said the infrastructure projects already in pipeline should push through, stressing the dire need for the country to catch up with its neighbors in the area of luring investments.

"We must not sacrifice the country's need for more investments, and so we need to spend more on infrastructure," Neri said in an interview. He said the government should keep up with what it has programmed to spend for infrastructure this year.

According to the government's 2007 fiscal program, it is allowed to spend as much as P142.4 billion for capital outlays. This represents close to 13 percent of this year's national budget of P1.126 trillion, which also covers spending for social services, operating expenses and debt servicing.

Maximizing spending for infrastructure is one of the suggestions of the Neda to President Arroyo, who will deliver her State-of-the-Nation address on Monday. In her speech, the President is expected to discuss her administration's plans to improve the country's level of infrastructure as a means of wooing investors.

Neri said infrastructure projects targeted for the second-half included the linkage of the Northrail and Southrail systems. Phase I of the project covers the railway interconnection from Caloocan City to Alabang, while Phase II entails the Alabang-to-Calamba link.

Other projects include the construction and rehabilitation of several airports and seaports, improvement of irrigation systems and road improvements, Neri said.

Authorities are soliciting private-sector investments to complement the budget allotted for capital outlays by the national government to help boost infrastructure development.

Doubts on the ability of the Arroyo administration to carry on with its infrastructure-related plans surfaced after reports that the government had a hard time meeting its tax collection targets in the past six months.

The government has also been spending less than programmed in the first half.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said, however, that the government was still confident of meeting, if not surpassing, its revenue goals for the year because of the expected proceeds from the sale of state-owned assets.

The government is selling its 24-percent stake in San Miguel Corp., a deal that can potentially generate P50 billion for state coffers. The government is likewise working on privatizing its 12-percent stake in Manila Electric Co. and is expecting to get at least P11 billion if the sale pushes through.

The government's economic managers said the economy needed to grow by at least 7 percent a year to reduce the poverty incidence.

Neri said attaining a 7-percent growth in the country's gross domestic product would be possible this year or next if only all the infrastructure-development plans would push through as scheduled.

The government has officially set its GDP growth target for this year at between 6.1 and 6.7 percent. In the first quarter, the economy grew by 6.9 percent from a year earlier.

# Action agenda to boost RP competitiveness drawn up

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL COMPETITIVENESS Council yesterday laid out an action agenda for the next three years, which showed that the basic need to enhance the country's standing in the global economy was to improve people's quality of life.

Broken up into six working groups, the NCC identified 40 focus points designed to uplift the Philippines' performance in competitiveness rankings, which slid by three notches to 45th out of 55 countries based on the World Competitiveness Yearbook of 2007.

Conducted by the Switzerland-based Institute of Management Development, the WCY 2007 looked into various countries' economic performance and government efficiency.

Each country was evaluated in terms of domestic economy, international trade, international investment, employment and prices, as well as public finance, fiscal policy, institutional framework, business legislation and societal framework.

The NCC's working group in human resource development proposed that proficiency in English, Science and Mathematics be improved by promoting the teaching profession and hiring more teachers in the three subjects.

The sub-group also put forward the need to add an 11th year for basic education; adopt a nationwide school-feeding program up to Grade 4 through public sector-private sector partnership efforts; address the mismatch in skills and labor market demands; pursue various on-the-job training or dualtech (training scholars from poor sectors in companies for eventual hiring) projects, and institute good governance in priority professions like nursing, accountancy and medicine.

The sub-group on financing focused on providing funding access to micro, small and medium enterprises, coming up with the following thrusts: Setting rules that would encourage banks to lend to SMEs; lower rediscount rates for SME exporters and persuade banks to lower pass-on lending rates correspondingly; intensify capacity-building for SME borrowing and financial management and SME lending capacity of banks.

The group on financing also proposed the provision of alternative support programs for SME exporters, such as an export promotion fund; as well as implementing the SME and agri-agra lending rules "in a manner that keeps to the spirit of the law," and to provide guidelines and safeguards so that alternative compliance is not made the rule rather than the exemption.

The group in charge of efficient public and private sector management proposed that a quality management system be implemented in government offices; fast-track the implementation of the government rationalization program, and put up a system of "cross-posting" between senior public and private sector officials.

The group also pushed for the development of programs that would make cities "achieve world-class performance"; promotion of private-sector volunteerism; making the Internet a standard tool in government offices with functions related to business processes.

On lowering electricity costs, the sub-group on energy proposed to make liberalization of markets or "open access" voluntary; amend the power reform law; temporarily reduce the government's royalty from natural energy resources; run a no-nonsense energy conservation drive; push the privatization of government's power assets; support for electric cooperatives, and promotion of renewable energy.

As for transaction costs and flows, the sub-group proposed for more liberal procedures on the entry and exit of foreign businessmen and of goods; improving processes in starting a business, registering a property and securing licenses; streamlining of incentives application and developing diagnostic tools for and undertake capacity-building for regulatory agencies.

The sub-group on infrastructure pushed for the lighting of airports for safer night operations; progressive liberalization of the aviation sector or open skies; accelerating the development of the nautical highway; reduction of the cost of exporting a cargo container, and the completion of priority infrastructure projects, especially new tollways, airports and light rails.

## Shares close higher

From page B1

buying into the initial public offering by broadcaster GMA Network.

Jose Vistan of AB Capital Securities said: "The liquidity drain resulting from a series of stock offerings this month made investors hesitant to trade."

He said domestic political concerns and the fact that the market has not corrected substantially after hitting new highs recently had also discouraged investors from making decisive moves.

Vistan said some investors were worried about what might happen after a court trying former President Joseph Estrada on corruption charges delivers its verdict in the next few weeks. Estrada still has a large following.

Shares in PLDT closed P5 higher at P2,705, tracking the gains Tuesday in its New York-listed American depositary receipts.

Shares in Ayala Corp. rose P5 to P565.

Manila Electric Co. or Meralco gave up early gains, with the A-shares closing flat at P103 and its B-shares retreating a peso to P103.

San Miguel A-shares fell a peso to P74 while San Miguel B-shares was steady at P82.50. *AFP*

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REPUBLIKA NG PILIPINAS

## Gov't overshoots budget deficit ceiling

From page B1

sets and the implementation of governance-related programs to attain the revenue goal and meet the deficit ceiling for the year," Teves said in a briefing yesterday.

Revenue collections for the first half included P334.7 billion in taxes collected by the Bureau of Internal Revenue, P92.2 billion in taxes and duties collected by the Bureau of Customs, and P34.2 billion in other income collected by the Bureau of the Treasury.

Collections of the BIR were P38.6-billion short of its target of P373.3 billion. Revenues contributed by the BOC were also P13.1-billion short of its goal of P105.3 billion. But revenues collected by the Treasury, including dividends from state-owned firms and earnings from investments in bonds, were higher by P4.6 billion than the goal of P29.6 billion.

BIR Assistant Commissioner Corazon Pangcog said some of the programs that the BIR, the biggest revenue earner for the government, would implement included intensified tax auditing, collection of accounts receivables, update of taxpayers database and sale of forfeited assets.

Teves said that under the best-case scenario, the BIR would partly recover the shortfall it recorded in the first half and collect taxes that would be P20-billion short of its full-year goal of P675 billion.

In the case of the BOC, he added, the best-case scenario was that it could entirely recover from its shortfall in the first half and meet its P228-billion target.

## GMA to push tax . . .

From page B1

The DOF itself has been pushing for the exemption of minimum wage earners from the income tax despite potential losses in revenue collection that will result from the measure.

The DOF said exempting them from the income tax would give substantial relief to low-income earners, although it will only lead to a measly loss of revenues of about P500 million a year for the government.

The need for a law exempting minimum wage earners from the income tax has become urgent, finance officials said, especially because Malacañang issued an executive order last year directing employers not to withhold income taxes of their minimum-wage employees.

But a law formally exempting minimum wage earners from the income tax has to be passed, finance officials stressed.

They explained that in the absence of a law, minimum wage earners were still liable to pay the income tax. The matter has become a problem because income tax liabilities of minimum wage earners have already accumulated following the lifting of the withholding mechanism.

Minimum wage earners exempted from the tax withholding mechanism are those whose monthly salary is P5,000 or below, or whose annual salary does not exceed P60,000. Minimum wage earners also include those whose daily pay is P325 or below.

*Michelle V. Remo*

METRO ILOILO WATER DISTRICT
Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
Tel. Nos. (033) 337-4744; 337-8482; 337-3235
(033) 337-3246; 337-3272; 335-0147
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**INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID**

The Metro Iloilo Water District (MIWD), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following contracts:

| Item No. | Qty. | Name of Contracts | Approved Budget for the Contract | Cost of Bid Documents (Non-Refundable) | Delivery Period/ Contract Duration |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 lot | Supply and Delivery of Office Vehicle | P 2,700,000.00 | P1,500.00 | 15 cds |
| 2 | 1 lot | Supply and Delivery of Filled Liquid Chlorine | P 1,800,000.00 | P1,000.00 | 30 cds |
| 3 | 1 lot | Supply and Delivery of Utility Van | P 1,600,000.00 | P1,000.00 | 15 cds |
| 4 | 1 lot | Supply and Delivery of uPVC Pipes | P 1,414,000.00 | P1,000.00 | 30 cds |
| 5 | 1 lot | Supply and Delivery of Motorcycle | P 600,000.00 | P750.00 | 30 cds |

Prospective bidders should have the experience in undertaking a similar contract within the last two years with an amount of 50% of the proposed contract for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted accordingly.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

Bid Documents and additional information may be obtained at the BAC Secretariat, Second Floor of the MIWD Building, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City.

The schedule of procurement activities is as follows:

| BAC ACTIVITIES | SCHEDULE |
|---|---|
| 1. Advertisement | July 17-23, 2007 |
| 2. Issuance of Bid Documents | July 24 - August 1, 2007 |
| 3. Pre-bid Conference | August 2, 2007, 2:00 p.m. |
| 4. Deadline of Submission of Bids | August 14, 2007, 9:00 a.m. |
| 5. Opening of Bids | August 14, 2007, 9:00 a.m. |

The MIWD BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive minor informality in the bids received, declare a failure of bidding for any justified and reasonable ground, and to award the contract to the bidder whose bid, as evaluated by the BAC, is most advantageous to the District.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) MARY JEANNE M. VILLAGRACIA
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - July 19, 2007)

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The Metro Iloilo Water District (MIWD), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites qualified contrators to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following contracts:

| Item No. | Qty. | Name of Contracts | Approved Budget for the Contract | Cost of Bid Documents (Non-Refundable) | PCAB Category | Contract Duration |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 1 lot | Construction of Elevated Steel Tank at Sedimentation Basin, Brgy. Buntalan, Maasin, Iloilo | P 5,670,553.30 | P2,500.00 | C or D | 90 cds |
| 2 | 1 lot | Construction of By-Pass Line and Sand Trap at Sedimentation Basin, Brgy. Buntalan, Maasin, Iloilo | P 3,429,405.00 | P1,500.00 | C or D | 90 cds |
| 3 | 1 lot | Replacement of Old ACP Pipeline from Molo Plaza to Arevalo Plaza, Iloilo City | P 1,754,480.00 | P1,000.00 | C or D | 120 cds |

Prospective bidders should have the experience in pipeline or related works with a contract amount of at least 50% of the approved budget for the contract for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted accordingly.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

Bid Documents and additional information may be obtained at the BAC Secretariat, Second Floor of the MIWD Building, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City.

The schedule of procurement activities is as follows:

| BAC ACTIVITIES | SCHEDULE |
|---|---|
| 1. Advertisement | July 13-19, 2007 |
| 2. Submission of Letter of Intent and Eligibility Requirements | July 19-25, 2007 |
| 3. Eligibility Check | July 26, 2007 |
| 4. Issuance of Bid Documents | July 27 - August 2, 2007 |
| 5. Pre-bid Conference | August 3, 2007, 2:00 p.m. |
| 6. Deadline of Submission of Bids | August 15, 2007, 10:00 a.m. |
| 7. Opening of Bids | August 15, 2007, 10:00 a.m. |

The MIWD BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive minor informality in the bids received, declare a failure of bidding for any justified and reasonable ground, and to award the contract to the bidder whose bid, as evaluated by the BAC, is most advantageous to the District.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) MARY JEANNE M. VILLAGRACIA
Chair, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI - July 19, 2007)

# Rustan's, SM expand retail operations in Cebu

## Local companies also investing in new strip malls, outlets

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
*Inquirer Visayas*

CEBU CITY—CEBU CONTINUES to attract investments in the retail sector as both local and Manila-based retail companies are expanding their operations here.

The Rustan's group of companies just opened its second Rustan's Fresh Supermarket outlet here, but it already plans to further increase its presence.

Shopwise president Bienvenido Tantoco III said in an interview that the company will first focus on consolidating its chain of supermarkets in Metro Manila.

"We took over a chain of supermarkets. We are busy with the integration, which will take between eight and 12 months," Tantoco said.

After the integration is completed, he said the company would look at possible expansion in Cebu.

"We see the potential in retail (here in Cebu), especially in the hypermarket. We want a meaningful and larger presence in Cebu," Tantoco said.

He added that the group will expand gradually over the next three years.

"It makes no sense to have only two outlets here," Tantoco added.

Tantoco and other officials of the Rustan's Group of companies, headed by its chair Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco Sr., came to Cebu for the opening of its second Rustan's Supermarket Fresh outlet in Ayala Center Cebu.

Ambassador Tantoco said Rustan's was the first retail company based in Metro Manila that set up operations in Cebu.

"We had a vision of great potential and possibilities that Cebu represented. We are gratified that this vision has found its fulfillment," he said during the pre-opening ceremony last week.

The ambassador also noted that it took other Metro Manila based retail developers over 10 years to start operations in Cebu.

Located at the Ayala Center Cebu annex building, the Rustan's Supermarket would make freshness its top priority, according to a company statement.

Aside from the Rustan's group of companies, other Cebu-based and Manila-based retail companies consider the province as a major investment destination.

SM City Cebu's ongoing expansion, The Northwing, is scheduled for completion by the fourth quarter this year.

After The Northwing's completion, the SM Group also plans to construct another building at the back of the hotel building.

Another upcoming retail development is the proposed Parkmall at 168, at the Mandaue City Reclamation Area.

Carlos Co, president of the Golden Great Value Properties Inc. (GGVPI), said the company would invest P200 million to P250 million for the project.

GGVPI is leasing six hectares from the Mandaue City government, including the former Uniwide structure, Co said.

He said GGVPI would renovate the former Uniwide structure, which would become the strip mall component of the project.

The strip mall would start operations by October this year, Co added.

# Mindanao: Gateway to Asean

MINDANAWORLD

*Joji Ilagan-Bian*

CONSIDERED THE SECOND LARGEST island in the country, Mindanao has finally started getting the attention of travelers.

Mindanao tourist arrivals, particularly those from other countries, have increased over the years despite unfavorable travel advisories issued by western countries, many of which did not even have sound basis.

Last year, total visitor arrival here reached 2.93 million, with 108,062 coming from other countries such as the US, Japan, Korea, Australia and Malaysia. This was 10 percent more than year-ago level.

Mindanao has three international airports—located in the cities of Davao, Zamboanga and General Santos—although only the first two accommodate direct international flights.

### Initiatives

Prime movers of Mindanao development, especially tourism industry players, have come together to promote Mindanao as an international gateway, given its proximity to the rest of the countries in Asia and the Pacific and its accessibility considering its air and sea linkages with those countries.

The Department of Tourism and the airline companies in Davao City, for example, came up with a program that aims to intensify travel between Davao, a haven for business in Mindanao, and the rest of the world.

During the program launch, airline executives announced some proposed flights between the city and certain international destinations.

Similar moves have also been undertaken in other parts of Mindanao. In Zamboanga City, based on the announcement of the Mindanao Economic Development Council in May, Asian Spirit had started servicing three times a week the Zamboanga City-Sandakan, Malaysia route using the Japanese-built Weiss-11 60-seater plane.

There are also attempts to mount direct flights between Zamboanga and Bander Seri Begawan, the capital of Brunei Darrusalam.

### Fifth freedom rights

These developments are taking place as the four-country East Asean Growth Area started implementing the fifth freedom traffic rights. Leaders of Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and the Philippines believe that with the implementation of this travel concept, their respective destinations will get a boost from the growing number of Asian and other foreign travelers.

This particular travel mechanism, which Mindanao leaders have been pushing since a decade ago, allows an aircraft to pick passengers and cargoes in any airport within the sub-region aside from its home airport. This enables an airline to sustain operations even in missionary routes.

Many flights in the past did not survive mainly because traffic was not really that active even in primary Mindanao destinations such as Davao, General Santos, Cagayan de Oro, Zamboanga and Cotabato.

With the strengthening of cooperation between Mindanao and the rest of the East Asean Growth Area, great things are expected to take place in the tourism sector, including more flights between the sub-region and the rest of the world.

There is an attempt to bring in more tourists from China and South Korea. These markets have expressed interests in Mindanao. Last month, the tourism industry players in Davao went to Seoul for the Korean World Travel Mart as part of the Philippine delegation.

### Sea linkages

There is also the emerging sea linkages between key Mindanao areas and the rest of the sub-region. One of them is the link between General Santos City and Bitung, Indonesia which has been vibrant in the last couple of months owing to increasing trade between the Jose Abad Santos-Sarangani-Glan-Cooperation Triangle, and Bitung and other nearby ports.

These developments should provide more business and tourism opportunities for Mindanao and make it a viable gateway not only to the Asean but also to the rest of the world.

*(Joji Ilagan Bian is an advocate for the development of Mindanao. She is chair of Joji Ilagan Foundation, Phil. Call Centers Alliance and Mindanao Tech Voc Schools Association. E-mail comments jojibian2@yahoo.com)*

# *Indie spirit takes hold of bag company*

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CORPORATE CITIZEN

RETAILER BRATPACK SAYS IT IS IN the business of having fun.

This is because it caters primarily to the youth who come to its stores to buy popular brands of bags, such as Jansport, Hedgren and Timbuktu.

The youth, however, are a fickle group.

They are always on the lookout for the next exciting thing, which forces retailers to always come up with something new to keep its customers loyal and competing stores at bay.

Bratpack, owned by Uniglobe Travelware Co. Inc., met the daunting challenge to make its stores stand out from the rest by reaching out to the country's growing legion of talented graphic artists.

Roel Chan, Bratpack marketing communications manager, said in an interview that the company has contracted graphic artists to put their stamp on Jansport bags, which will then be sold at a premium to those who want specially-designed bags.

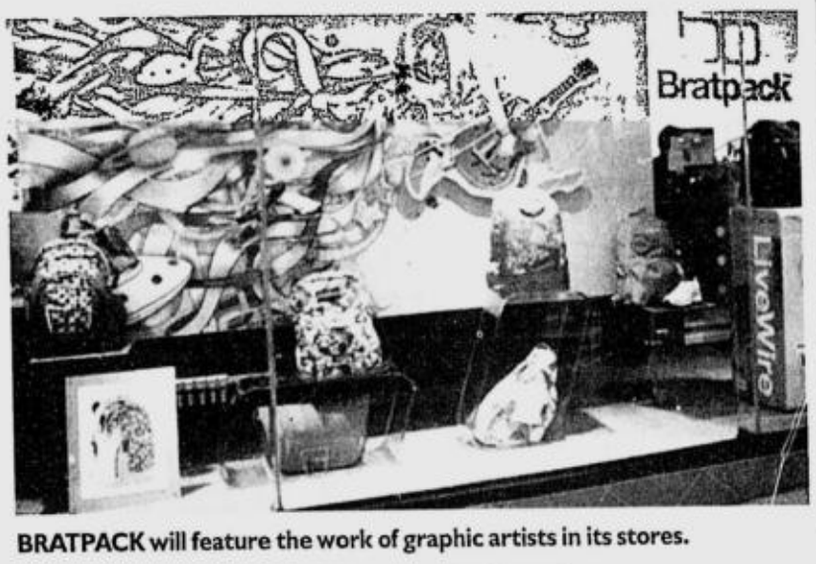
In addition, the featured graphic artists will be allowed to design one part of the retail store—a blank canvas for them to feature their art and showcase their skills, such as graffiti art or airbrush.

The partnership means that Bratpack stores will always sport a new look and that customers will have the chance to bring home their own bag, which is a definite come-on among the youth who prize individuality.

At the same time, graphic artists get a venue for their art and P1,000 for every bag of their design sold in the stores.

"We did this because we saw all the great talent out there. We will provide a venue for them to express themselves to a bigger market," Chan said.

At the same time, their art will raise backpacks to a new level.



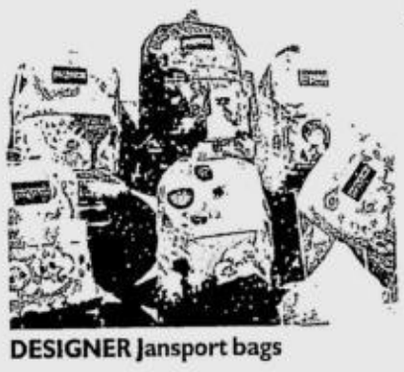

**BRATPACK** will feature the work of graphic artists in its stores.

"Bags have always been seen as utility bags. With the partnership, bags can now be part of fashion, a medium for buyers to express themselves," Chan said.

Chan said the public will get to view the fruit of the partnership next week when the Bratpack branch in Ermita features the art of Electrolychee, a graphic design team.

They will design seven bags and also paint one wall.

Chan said another six stores in and around Metro Manila will feature one artist each week in the coming weeks. And an initial seven bags will be designed by each artist for each store.



**DESIGNER** Jansport bags

Bratpack, he said, would only earn from the sale of the bag as the premium will go to the artist.

Their art and bags will be featured for one to two months, after which they can be moved to other branches.

The partnership with graphic artists is part of Uniglobe's campaign to support the underground artists—be it graphic designers or bands.

Jansport, which is represented by Uniglobe in the Philippines, has its own program supporting independent bands.

It organizes 11 to 12 small concerts throughout the year to help bring out the talent of artists that have not yet been signed up by major recording companies.

Chan said Jansport was attracted to underground artists because the market is steady and "authentic," albeit small.

He, however, said that Bratpack could not afford to be out of touch with the so-called independent artists because the trend toward "indie" music, movies and art is here to stay.

"Indie is a trend among the youth that is here to stay. It will be even bigger over the next few years," Chan said.

GLOBAL SHAKEDOWN

# Seaweed firms in crisis, but optimistic

CEBU CITY—THE RISING PESO and prices of raw materials, and new competitors are hounding the Philippine carrageenan industry, but its leaders are optimistic they will survive the crisis.

"We wish to turn the crisis into an opportunity," Benson U. Dakay, president of the Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines (Siap), told a two-day national seaweed congress held recently in Cebu.

Dakay noted a global shakedown in the carrageenan industry. In China alone, he said, the seaweed processors dropped from 500 companies to only five major players.

In the case of Philippine processors, Dakay noted that the peso appreciation has made their product less competitive.

A major seaweed processor based in Cebu has outsourced the bulk of its carrageenan requirement to another Cebu-based processor.

Dakay also cited the rising seaweed prices.

While Philippine seaweed costs $1000 each metric ton, Dakay said, the Indonesian seaweed sells at $700 each metric ton.

He also recalled that the Indonesian seaweed used to sell at $500 per metric ton.

Philippine processors prefer using the locally grown seaweed because it has a better quality but Dakay said the $300-dollar difference already has impact on the pricing of their carrageenan.

Another problem is the emergence of new processors, he pointed out.

The Philippine-based seaweed processors have increased from 20 to 25, Dakay said.

He explained that the increase in capacity is way above the increase in the demand for carrageenan.

To help the industry, the Department of Agriculture has committed to take the lead in the national seaweed industry development program.

Agriculture Undersecretary Jesus Emmanuel Paras said they are looking at five areas: Research and development, training, post-harvest concerns, market and credit facility.

In the past, the Department of Trade and Industry took a lead role in the program but it was agreed during the conference that DA would head the program, Dakay said.

Paras, in an interview, said the DA would help bring down the price of seaweed by training the seaweed farmers to use technology that would make them more efficient.

On the other hand, Dakay said the seaweed farmers also asked the processors to set a minimum selling price for seaweed in case there is abundant supply of the raw material.

He said his company, Shemberg Marketing Corp. and other major companies, agreed to the P32 minimum-selling price requested by the farmers.

Siap would also take an active role in linking the farmers to lending facilities although some of their members would, on their own, help the farmers by advancing money to seaweed farmers, Dakay said.

He said Siap would attend a meeting with the DA, DTI and other government agencies to formalize the assistance program for the farmers.

On the other hand, the processors would have to look for new market and develop new applications to survive the crisis, Dakay said. *Irene R. Sino Cruz, Inquirer Visayas*



**CARAGEENAN** farmers are reeling from the effects of a strong peso.

## GOINGS-ON

### UE-Frasi seminar on WTO

THE UE-FOUNDATION FOR RESEARCH AND ADVANCED STUDIES (UE-Frasi) will conduct a roundtable discussion entitled "Advancing Philippine Interests in WTO Issues" on Friday, July 20 from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the UE Conference Hall, 4th/f, F. Dalupan Sr. Building, C. M. Recto Avenue, Manila.

Representatives from the business, trade and management associations; research organizations; graduate schools and research organizations will tackle the WTO issues affecting the country, including policies on agriculture, trade, tariff, telecommunication and transportation. For details, visit the UE-Frasi office or call tel. nos. 735-5471 to 82 local 446 or 736-1752.

### Swiss business luncheon at SGS office

Société Générale de Surveillance Phils. (SGS) recently hosted the Swiss Executive Business Luncheon at its Makati offices. The group is led by Swiss Ambassador Peter Sutter and SGS Phils. chief executive officer Rosario C. Bradbury. The guests were composed mainly of executives of Swiss firms operating in the country, including Credit Suisse Phils., Philippine Associated Smelting and Refining Corp., Asea Brown Boveri, Novartis Helath Care Phils., Nestlé Phils. and Glencore Far East Phils.

### Sybase's new president

Enterprise IT solutions provider Sybase Solutions Corp. recently named IT veteran Rod Perez its new president. Perez is a former sales and marketing director of Oracle Philippines. He also held senior executive positions in nisys, Headstrong (formerly James Martin & Co.) and Online Advance Systems.

### CEO Suite taps Asia Netcom

Asia Netcom said it had signed a memorandum of agreement with CEO Suite.

Under the agreement, Asia Netcom will provide CEO Suite with dedicated Internet access to support its first serviced office in the Philippines.

Asia Netcom will initially deliver a 2 Mbps standard DIA giving CEO Suite and its growing list of corporate clients, direct access to all major Internet destinations in the US and in Asia.

CEO Suite, a Singapore-based serviced office operator which runs a boutique style of serviced-office spaces across key Asian cities, recently opened a US$2-million facility in Metro Manila's premiere financial district to cater to start-up enterprises.

Asia Netcom's regional IP backbone consists of more than 70 Gbps of intra-Asia and trans-Pacific capacity.

## *Oil prices higher in Asian trade*

SINGAPORE—OIL PRICES WERE higher in Asian trade yesterday with the market focused on the release of the weekly US energy inventory data, dealers said.

Yesterday morning, New York's main contract, light sweet crude for August delivery, was up 23 cents at $74.25 a barrel from $74.02 in late US trades Tuesday.

Brent North Sea crude for September was up 17 cents at $75.70.

"The market is waiting for the US inventory data," said Tetsu Emori, chief commodities strategist at Mitsui Bussan Futures in Tokyo.

He said the market was expecting a small drawdown in crude oil stockpiles in the world's biggest economy and a rise in gasoline (petrol) inventories.

Emori said he expected prices to ease because there was ample supply in the global market.

"The oil market overall is overbought at the moment against the fundamentals and against technical charts. I think the market ... is ready to fall," he said.

Oil prices have rallied strongly since last week after the International Energy Agency raised its 2008 forecast for oil demand by 2.5 percent to 88.2 million barrels a day.

The US Department of Energy (DoE) is due to release its weekly report on the country's energy reserves, closely watched data because the United States is the world's biggest energy consumer.

The DoE said last week that gasoline reserves climbed 1.2 million barrels in the week ending July 6, beating forecasts of a gain of 825,000, but they were still 3.8 percent lower than a year earlier.

The market continues to focus on tight US supplies of gasoline during the peak-demand driving season, when many Americans take to the roads for their summer holidays.

Unrest in Nigeria, the largest producer in Africa, is also bolstering oil prices, dealers say. *AFP*

# Top WTO negotiators attempt to break Doha round deadlock

## New suggestions involve subsidy cuts

GENEVA—THE WTO LAUNCHED A CRUcial bid to break the deadlock in the Doha Round of global trade talks on Tuesday with new proposals that advocate sharp cuts in US farm support and in developing country industrial import duties.

The World Trade Organization's chief agriculture negotiator made new suggestions that would involve cuts in US agricultural support to below $16.2 billion a year, compared with a ceiling of $19 billion allowed now, officials said.

Meanwhile, his counterpart leading talks on "Non Agricultural Market Access," proposed reductions in industrial tariffs charged by 27 developing nations to less than 23 percent.

The proposals in two of the three key pillars of the Doha Development Round were part of broader efforts to overcome nearly six years of failure in the Doha trade liberalization talks.

The propositions will form the backbone of further talks over the coming weeks to broker a compromise that must be approved unanimously by the 150 WTO members—preferably before the talks are hampered by fallout from the 2008 US Presidential election campaign.

Chief negotiators have said they intend to raise the pressure for a compromise deal in September, after countries have had time to mull over the new technical papers during a summer break.

WTO Director General Pascal Lamy called the proposals a "fair and reasonable basis" for reaching an "ambitious" agreement.

"Members will not be fully satisfied with the texts. But what separates members today is smaller than what unites them," Lamy said.

Washington said in a statement that it was examining the proposals made Tuesday, as officials scrambled to understand the real-world implications of the cuts.

"Both of the texts will demand close analysis as we develop a comprehensive US reaction," said Gretchen Hamel, a spokesperson for the US Trade Representative.

The European Union called the texts "a useful step forward" but voiced caution.

"There are points on which we have important concerns and other significant issues in the negotiations that are not included in these texts," European Commission officials said in a statement.

Industrialized economies such as the United States and European Union have been seeking easier access to markets in developing countries in exchange for cuts in their own farm protection.

The draft modalities on industrial goods suggested that 27 developing nations, including Brazil and India, bring import tariffs down to about 19 to 23 percent, while a longer adaptation period was suggested for China.

That is lower than the amounts Brazil and India have so far offered.

Brazil held out hope for an agreement on the Doha Round on Tuesday before the publication of the new proposals.

The trade officials gave the estimates on US agricultural subsidy cuts based on generic formulas outlined in documents released here Tuesday, which do not mention specific countries.

But the agricultural text suggested that economies with subsidies at the level of the United States should lower their "overall trade distorting domestic support" by 66 or 73 percent.

Economies at the level of the European Union, which has higher subsidies for farming, would reduce their support by 75 or 85 percent.

Suggested cuts in import duties on farm produce would amount to 52 to 53.5 percent, which is within a range European Union Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson has indicated he is ready to accept.

Representatives from the WTO's 150 members are due to meet in negotiating groups next week in Geneva to give their initial reactions.

The WTO's 150 members are at odds over the extent of new reductions in barriers to trade in agriculture, industrial goods and services amid cross-cutting disagreements between rich and poor countries over cuts in import tariffs and farm subsidies. *AFP*

# China set to overtake Germany

BEIJING—CHINA'S ECONOMY GREW SO rapidly in the first half of 2007 that it is likely to overtake Germany as the world's third-largest by the end of this year, having already topped Britain and France.

Data due Thursday should provide fresh evidence that Beijing's efforts to slow the runaway economy down have had little effect, with growth likely on a par with the blistering 11.1 percent of the three months to March.

Recent figures show that China expanded even faster than originally thought last year—at 11.1 percent instead of 10.7 percent—to produce an economy worth $2.65 trillion.

The revision puts China within striking distance of Europe's largest economy, having overtaken Britain and France in 2005 for fourth spot on the global rankings behind Germany, Japan and the United States.

"With this upward revision, it is highly likely that China will bypass Germany to become the third-largest economy in the world ... by the end of this year," said Hong Liang, an economist at Goldman Sachs.

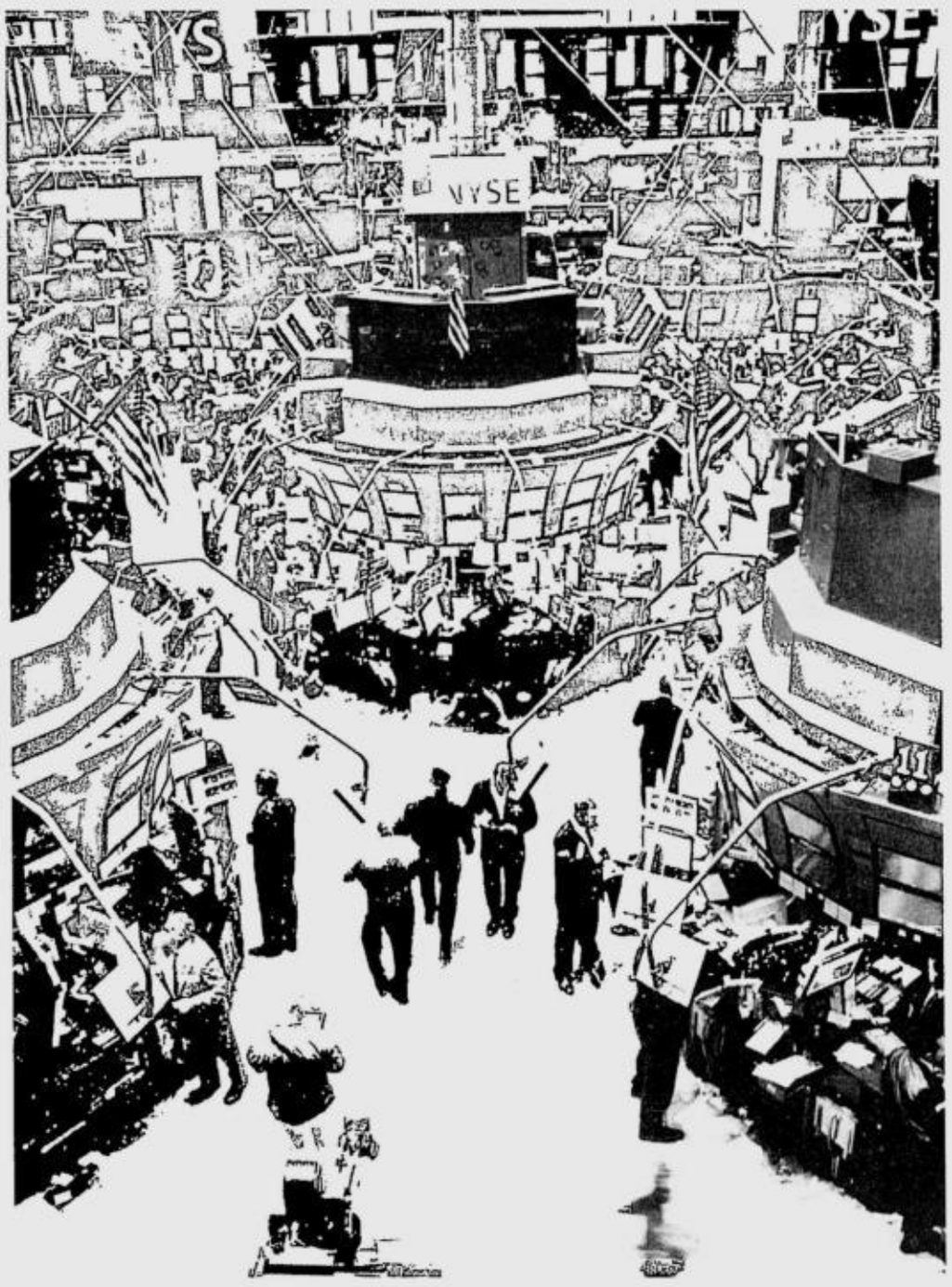
According to the World Bank, Germany's economy was worth $2.9 trillion at the end of 2006.

JPMorgan Chase Bank economist Wang Qian puts second quarter growth at 10.6 percent and said it would pick up speed in the second half of the year.

"We don't see any sector of the economy slowing down. It's firing on all cylinders," said Wang.

The torrid pace means that China's economic czars will once again have to devise fresh ways to prevent the export powerhouse from the kind of overheating that could trigger a slide into financial crisis.

Regulators have already this year introduced a slew of measures to slow the economy, including two interest rate hikes, five increases in bank reserve requirements and new export curbs. *AFP*




**TRADERS work on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange July 17 in New York City. The Dow passed the 14,000 mark in intraday trading but fell back to close at 13971.55, a new record.** AFP

# US inflation declines; industrial output up

WASHINGTON—WHOLESALE inflation posted a better-than-expected reading as both food and energy costs retreated in June.

Industrial production rebounded as well, but homebuilders' confidence fell to the lowest level in 16 years as the housing slump persisted.

Reports released Tuesday painted a picture of a US economy that is emerging from last winter's severe slowdown despite the continued weakness in housing.

And in what will be welcome news at the Federal Reserve, the recent acceleration in inflation caused by a surge in energy and food costs appears to be abating.

The Labor Department's Producer Price Index fell by 0.2 percent last month following a 0.9 percent surge in May.

It was the first decline since January and a much better showing than the small rise that had been expected. Gasoline prices fell for the first time since January and food costs dipped for a second month in a row.

Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve reported that industrial output rose by a solid 0.5 percent in June, led by strong growth in manufacturing, which is bouncing back following a period of weakness when the year began as businesses struggled to work down a backlog of unsold goods.

However, housing, the economy's major weak spot, continued to be a problem in early July as a confidence survey by the National Association of Home Builders dropped to a reading of just 24, the lowest level since January 1991, during the last major housing correction. The index had been at 28 in June.

Wall Street reacted positively to the flood of data, sending the Dow Jones industrial average sailing above the 14,000-level, taking just 57 trading days to make the trip from 13,000.

Investors believe the economy's current performance will mean the Federal Reserve, which has kept interest rates unchanged for the past year, will remain on the sidelines for the rest of this year and into 2008, giving borrowers a break.

Fed Chairman Ben Bernanke is set to deliver the central bank's midyear economic forecast to Congress on Wednesday. Analysts predicted he would repeat the Fed's concern that inflation is still a bigger risk than a possible recession.

Core inflation at the wholesale level, which excludes volatile food and energy, rose by a higher than expected 0.3 percent in June, but analysts discounted this increase as being heavily influenced by a jump in new car prices. Without those gains, core inflation would have been up a much more modest 0.1 percent.

The central bank should get further reassurances that inflation pressures are ebbing when the government releases its report on consumer prices Wednesday.

Analysts predicted inflation at the consumer level probably would slow to a tiny 0.1 percent increase, a much better showing that May's 0.7 percent surge. *AP*

# Dow Jones board approves Murdoch $5-B takeover deal

NEW YORK—THE BOARD OF US media firm Dow Jones & Co voted to approve a $5-billion takeover bid by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp., the target company announced late Tuesday.

It confirmed a report in its daily business title The Wall Street Journal that it "would be prepared to approve, and recommend to the Dow Jones stockholders" the agreement, in a statement on its website.

The deal could reshape the US media industry but hurdles still have to be cleared, the leading paper reported.

Two directors abstained from the vote, which has divided key shareholders over concerns for the prestigious title's editorial independence, and one member left the meeting early, the newspaper said.

This was Chris Bancroft, of the family that holds a controlling voting stake in Dow Jones, who opposes the sale to Murdoch.

The Australian-born tycoon and News Corp. must now win over the Bancrofts since any prospective deal requires the family's ultimate approval.

The deal is expected to be presented to the Bancrofts at a meeting on Thursday, though it could take more days before the Bancrofts cast their decision on the deal.



**RUPERT MURDOCH, Chairman and CEO of News Corporation.** AFP

The newspaper said Murdoch and Dow Jones chief executive Richard Zannino had reached a tentative agreement at a lunch Monday, in what was likely to be the last round of talks on the possible takeover.

However, it remained uncertain whether the Bancroft family, which holds 64 percent of the voting stocks in Dow Jones, will back a deal, the newspaper reported late on Monday.

Zannino has described the family's stance on the proposal as too close to call, a source who spoke to him told the newspaper.

The family has been divided over the takeover prospect, with some members seeking steps to block it.

The Bancrofts initially rebuffed Murdoch's takeover, citing concerns about editorial independence, but negotiations have persisted between the parties as Murdoch has sought to allay the family's worries.

Murdoch resisted pressure from Dow Jones to raise his initial $60-per-share offer, and the $5-billion offer reflects his original bid.

The offer represents a hefty premium to the price of Dow Jones shares at the time of the offer, which might make it difficult for board members to reject.

A number of Wall Street Journal journalists and the IAPE union have also voiced strong opposition to Murdoch gaining control of Dow Jones and its prestigious business daily.

Some Journal reporters have publicly expressed concerns that Murdoch would erode the publication's editorial independence to boost the commercial interests of his global media empire. *AFP*

## *US business group joins call for action on global warming*

WASHINGTON—CHIEF EXECUTIVES OF many of the country's largest corporations joined the growing chorus Tuesday that wants action to reduce the risks of global warming.

The Business Roundtable, which represents 160 chief executives of leading US companies, said "collective actions" should be taken now to begin reducing heat-trapping "greenhouse" gases that many scientists believe are warming the earth.

"The consequences of global warming for society and ecosystems are potentially serious and far-reaching," the business group said. "Steps to address the risks of such warming are prudent now even while the science continues to evolve."

The group said its members have varying views on how to achieve the emission reductions, and not all the executives support mandatory carbon dioxide limits.

But the group said its members agree that reducing the amount of carbon dioxide going into the atmosphere should be made a top priority.

The policy statement "marks the first time that a broad cross-section of business leaders from every sector of the US economy have reached consensus on the risks posed by climate change and the need for action," said Business Roundtable President John Castellani.

The Business Roundtable is an association of CEOs of major corporations and represents a combined work force of more than 10 million employees and $4.5 trillion (euro3.3 trillion) in annual revenues.

Its members include major energy companies including Exxon Mobil Corp., Peabody Energy Co., the country's largest coal producer, and Southern Co., an electric utility that is among the largest coal users.

A growing number of business leaders have in recent months called for action to combat global warming, many of them supporting legislation that would impose mandatory limits on carbon emissions.

"There is a freight train of momentum of action," David Yarnold, executive vice president of Environmental Defense, said in response to the Business Roundtable announcement.

The executives' climate statement, however, reflected continuing divisions within the business community about what specific actions should be taken as well as concern over the potential economic impact of a policy that would require dramatic shifts in how society uses its energy resources.

"Some companies support mandatory approaches; others do not," said the Roundtable's climate statement. *AP*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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# People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

## Petron Car Care Centers: high quality service for less

PETRON CORP, THE COUNTRY'S largest oil company, is once again setting a new standard in motor vehicle care. With the opening of more Petron Car Care Centers this year, motorists will be able to enjoy car care service at par or even better than casa service without paying a premium price. This is another way that Petron is fulfilling its promise to fuel the success of Filipino motorists by delivering extra mileage for lesser cost.

The car manufacturer's service centers are no longer considered the only place to obtain quality car maintenance. Petron has proven that it can deliver quality service and for a lot less. When the first Petron Car Care Center opened last March 2006, at the Petron Service Station along C5 Diego Silang in Taguig, it featured a double lube bay, a single wash bay and enough parking spaces to service up to ten vehicles. It even had an air-conditioned customer lounge. It was an immediate hit with the car owners in the surrounding area. Soon even motorists from other locales brought their vehicles to the Petron Car Care Center because of the excellent reviews it got from repeat customers.

The key ingredients to the success of this endeavor are the state-of-the-art equipment and the carefully selected Petron Car Care service team composed of a service advisor, a chief mechanic, service technicians, washmen and office clerks, who all underwent intensive training for two months learning about the different Petron products, honing their customer relation skills and perfecting service operating procedures. These have resulted to a high satisfaction and repeat customer rate.

By duplicating this winning formula in other locations, Petron is taking the initiative to bring better service to a wider population. At each Petron Car Care Center, consumers can bring their cars in for various preventive maintenance and repair services such as lubrication; mechanical, under-chassis, and brake repairs; washing, undercoating, general troubleshooting and air-conditioning service.

Motorists who bring in their car to a Petron Car Care Center will automatically get a free safety inspection check. Customers are assured that their cars will be given a thorough inspection, with a repair list categorized as "required" for jobs that need to be done immediately and "suggested" repairs which can be put off for a certain period of time. The customer can then make his decision based on the full picture of the state of his vehicle.

The Petron Car Care Center service team always goes the extra mile for their customers. Customers can expect after service follow-up calls from the Petron Car Care team to check on the performance of the vehicle, to ask for customer feedback on the quality of the services, and to solicit suggestions and recommendations for further improvement. The Petron crew will also take the extra step and remind the customer of his next maintenance visit.

Petron Car Care Centers can now be found at C5 Road, Pamayanang Diego Silang in Taguig City, and at the Automoville Compound in Ortigas Avenue, Pasig City. Currently undergoing renovation to provide better service are the Petron Car Care Centers in Dasmariñas Village, Makati City, and Filinvest-Alabang, Muntinlupa City.

At Petron Car Care Centers you get service par excellence at an affordable price: that's a Petron promise.

### NEWSBOY KO, ALAGA KO

Last July 14, the Inquirer and Unilab concluded the 4th run of its newsboy medical mission catering to 190 newsboys from Sucat, Parañaque area. The medical mission started June 16 and will continue every Saturday of the week until September. Newsboys from Marikina area will be the next beneficiaries of the medical mission this coming Saturday, July 21. Shown in the picture are the volunteer nurses and Inquirer employees who have been sharing their time to help uplift the lives of Inquirer's newsboy partners.

### ABIVA PUBLISHING DONATES BOOKS FOR ZONTA AREA 5 CLUBS

Zonta is an international organization composed of professional women, dedicated to uplift the lives and protect the rights of women through service and advocacy programs. Zonta has 33,000 members , 1,200 clubs in 68 countries. Zonta Area 5 recently conducted a turnover of book donation from Abiva Publishing/Felta Multi-Media Inc June 25, in Makati City for its 16 member clubs. The respective Zonta club presidents received hundreds of books through Mylene Abiva-Sazon (president - Zonta Club of Metropolitan Pasig). In photo, seated (from left) Girlie Pleyto (Metro Rizal), Lizette Lim (Metro Ortigas), Mitzi Piad (Zonta Area 5 director), Mylene Abiva-Sazon (Metro Pasig) and Chona Lopez (Makati and Environs); standing (from left) Daidita Villaraza (Muntinlupa and Environs), Malou Lopez (Pateros and Taguig), Zeny Garcia (Legaspi City and Albay), Baby Tan (Pasig) and Chona Belmonte (Naga and Camarines Sur).

## ProductFILES

### McDonald's Eastwood re-opens its doors all day, all night

A NEW AND BRIGHTER MCDONALD'S EASTWOOD has recently re-opened to cater to the busy, laid back homebodies, nocturnal workers, and party night owls who need to satisfy their appetite with great tasting food. Open 24 hours a day, McDonald's Eastwood will be there to provide hot, fresh meals fast, making the customers' lives easy.

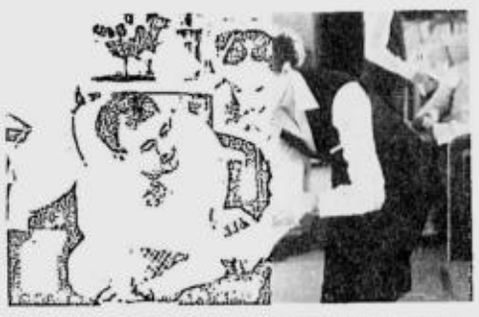
### The best-looking TabletPC from Toshiba

TOSHIBA SINGAPORE PTE LTD'S COMPUTER SYSTEMS division introduces the Portégé R400 notebook computer. As a convertible notebook computer, the Toshiba Portégé R400 combines a patent pending elevated rotational hinge and a 12.1-inch diagonal widescreen LED backlit high-brightness display with wide viewing angle. This screen technology combined with Microsoft Windows Aero delivers a rich and brilliant visual computing experience. The high-gloss finish of the Portégé R400 features an ultra-violet, clear coat for greater scratch-resistance than standard paint. The integration of a biometric fingerprint reader, multi-level passwords and a TPM 1.2 encryption module as part of the company's exclusive EasyGuard technology helps safeguard the Portégé R400 against unauthorized access, data theft, and virtual attacks. The new Portégé R400 series comes standard with a 3-year Carry-in International Limited Warranty inclusive of parts and labor (1-year battery). In addition, customers can now call in toll-free+ to the newly implemented Toshiba Global Support Centre that offers an innovative one-stop 24 hours, 7 days, round-the-globe services and support capabilities for their mobile computer products queries. For the full contact listing, go to http://pc.toshiba-asia.com/contact.jsp.

### Bigfish's 'Track Record' lets you take the party with you

BIGFISH HAS COME A LONG WAY SINCE IT CAME INTO EXISTENCE in 1999; from producing small club gigs featuring local acts to bringing in the hottest DJs from all around the world. And to prove its dedication to keeping the Filipino party people abreast with the exciting new developments in the worldwide club scene, Bigfish unleashes Track Record, the first ever compilation album released by the label. Track Record is a firecracker of an album that's loaded with sexy house tracks guaranteed to get anyone up on their feet and dancing in no time. Compiled by Activ8 Record's Moumen "Ricky" Daker, the album includes the latest gems from Moony, Bob Sinclair, Fedde Le Grand, Bonnie Bailey, Peyton, Fish Go Deep, Joey Negro, Dennis Christopher, Full Intention, Lock-town & Alexandria Prince, and John Paul. Throw in Bigfish resident DJ Johnboy Lee's expert touches and the result is a seamless, fluid mix of exhilarating tunes that lifts the spirit and makes it one with the beat. You don't need to be in a club to experience the invigorating thrill of the music. Just play Track Record anywhere and you've got one awesome party just bursting to happen.

### Excellent connections



FROM MUNICH TO SYLT, FROM SAARBRÜCKEN to Berlin for travel in Germany, Lufthansa offers more than 4,000 flights a week and does so at final prices which start for as little as 99 Euro. No other airline offers so many connections in Germany. Lufthansa passengers can reach a total of 22 cities in Germany by air, including some destinations with up to 15 flights a day. As a result, a German Lufthansa passenger needs hardly more than 90 minutes, in order to reach one of the airports served by Lufthansa, and to fly from there to all parts of the world. With daily flights between Manila and Frankfurt, Lufthansa connects the Philippines to Germany, offering the quickest and easiest gateway to Germany and to the rest of Europe. Business and leisure travelers can enjoy their flight with the hallmarks of excellence that Lufthansa is known for: efficiency, comfort and superb customer service. "Lufthansa's extensive global route network, first-class connections and wide range of convenient on-time travel options provide discerning travellers the best choice for their needs," said Lufthansa's general manager, Christopher Zimmer. And because flying already begins at the airport, Lufthansa is continuing to consistently further develop its ground services for passengers. The aim is to make it simpler, faster and more comfortable: online boarding cards, quick-boarding gates and quick-drop desks are just a few examples of how we are making travelling as easy as possible for our passengers. True to Lufthansa's motto: "There's no better way to fly."

### Blend in, stand out with Goody

GIVE UP THE FIGHT WITH UNRULY HAIR WITH THE NEW GOODY Colour Collection accessories infused with the StayPut technology. The technology is a step forward in hair solution that provides secure hold even on loose, wisp strands without tugging or pulling on your mane. In the corporate world where color restrictions are strictly enforced — from the uniform, stockings, and even with hair accessories — the Colour Collection comes to the rescue with its wide range of hair accessories that perfectly blend in with any hair color. Shades like brunette, red and blonde come in two tones each, and when fastened onto the hair, are very discreet they don't catch so much attention. Re-fixing is no longer a problem for these busy women since these accessories stay in place no matter what the activity is. No worries that it would come off the hair. The StayPut accessories efficiently deal with the everyday dilemma of keeping hair in place. Goody has also extended its 2007 Colour Collection line to black hair accessories to cater to dark-haired Asian women. Are you a raven black, onyx, sable? Go for either lighter or darker shade which blends well the accessories look like it's an extension of your crowning glory. Good news! For every P600 worth of purchase of Goody items, you get 1 Goody umbrella for free. Goody products are available at leading department stores nationwide.

## BITS Clips

### Utopia Grand Annual Fraternity Ball

THE FRATERNAL ORDER OF UTOPIA OF THE ATENEO DE MANILA Law will hold its Grand Annual Fraternity Ball on July 21, (Saturday) beginning 6 p.m. at the Rigodon Ballroom of the Manila Peninsula Hotel. Utopia is a brotherhood of Law students and Alumni lawyers committed to the values of service, sacrifice and excellence in the legal profession. It is involved in various community services and social responsibility projects. Among the highlights will be the elevation of Justice Renato C. Coruna to the Utopia Hall of Fame. For more information, interested members may call Fraternal Order of Utopia Foundation president lawyer Antonio Bernardo at 747-8385 to 87 or Fraternity Ball organizing committee chair lawyer Arturo Asuncion at 752-7548, 752-7529 or 0922-4716062.

### PISM elects new board

PHILIPPINE INSTITUTE FOR SUPPLY MANAGEMENT (PISM), A non-stock, non-profit organization of supply management practitioners from Top 1000 corporations has new set of board of directors with Daniel C. Belbis, CPM and logistics head of General Milling Corp as president. Other elected officers and directors are: 1st VP Paul A. Hamoy, CPM, head-supply management of SN Aboitiz Power Inc; 2nd VP Hilario Romil Acosta, CPM, supply chain director of PSI Technologies; 3rd VP Cynthia Villanueva, director of ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp; treasurer Frisco Guce, CPM, DSM, senior manager-materials management of IRRI; corporate secretary Alice Pascual, CPM, procurement head of Sunlife of Canada; director Lester Hernandez, CPM, senior manager of industry management of Bayantrade; director Daisy Cuevas, VP-materials management of St. Luke's Medical Center; director Perry Dominguez, CPM, manager-supply chain technical services of Ginebra San Miguel Inc; director Khris Albano, CPM, supply performance manager of Diageo Phils; director Ma. Victoria Chua, purchasing/admin manager of Lamoiyan Corp, director Alejandro Lito Aprieto, CPM, AVP-materials management department of Team Energy Corp; director Josefina Dimarucut, purchasing manager of Roche (Philippines) Inc, and director Agatha Manabal, CPM, associate non-stock purchasing manager of Johnson & Johnson (Phil) Inc. It's 1st General Membership Meeting and 39th Induction of New Officers and Directors will be on July 29 at the New World Renaissance Hotel. Gerry Payumo, president of Ginebra San Miguel Inc will lead the induction rites as he will also inspire members on the topic "Backroom to the Boardroom".

### CFM 29th Biennial Convention

THE CHRISTIAN FAMILY MOVEMENT (CFM) OF THE PHILIPpines, a mandated lay organization under the supervision of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines through the Episcopal Commission on Family and Life and the Episcopal Commission on Lay Apostolate will have its 29th Biennial Convention on Oct. 26-28, at the Ecotech Center, Sudlon Lahug, Cebu vity. The theme of the convention is "CFM Beyond 50: Stewardship on Social Concerns." Cardinal Rosales will be the main celebrant of the Sunday Eucharistic Celebration and Dr Lourdes Quisumbing will be the keynote speaker. For details and particulars contact: the local parish coordinator or the National CFNM Office at (02)724-6747/412-2738; Cebu City CFM Office c/o Ely and Babie Quisumbing at (032)232-6334/0917 622-3237; e-mail address: ely@quisumbing.net or visit www.29thcfmconvention.org.

### July entertainment at Tropezz

POP, ROCK, JAZZ AND SOUL FROM THE BEST LIVE BANDS AND performers in the metropolis will highlight the month of July 's entertainment at Tropezz Bar and Restaurant at the second level of Greenbelt 3 at the Ayala Center in Makati. Owners Obet and Isa Pascua, Jiji Fernandez and Alma Mallonga have lined up the top performers and functions this month at Tropezz like Shayne and the Brown Sugar, Kelly Badon and Kiko Versoza, Myxtreme, and other promising bands. Tropezz, located on the spot of the former Tavern on the Square, is inspired by Saint-Tropez, the famous seaside resort town in Southern France, home of the jet set and a culinary and entertainment haven. The dining area and bar is at the front while the larger space at the back is where the bands jam nightly. The owners describe Tropezz's menu as international island cuisine, a fusion of French and Filipino with Asian influences. Booj Supe, 26, is the chef behind the restaurant's broad culinary creations. Working with him is pastry chef Kat Pascual with a slew of sinfully delicious pastries. For details about the food and entertainment, you may call 757-4484.

### Sydenham introduces Jus' 4 Kids Plus

SYDENHAM LABORATORIES INC, ENCOURAGED BY THE company's success in the local health juice market and the international recognition its products have received, has introduced a new and improved variant of its health juice drink for children. The company has launched Jus' 4 Kids Plus, a health juice drink for children that combines all the nutrients of the company's Jus' 4 Kids product line-up. Jus' 4 Kids is currently available in orange and mango flavors. The orange-flavored Zoom! Growth Enhancer has Chlorella Growth Factor or CGF, which promotes physical growth in children. The mango-flavored IQ Tonic Brain Booster, on the other hand, contains Taurine, an amino acid that helps in the development of the brain and nervous system of children. Jus' 4 Kids Plus is made of natural juice puree and is the only juice drink in the market that contains both CGF and Taurine. It is also fortified with Vitamins A, C, E, B1, B3, Zinc, and Iodine-micronutrients that help improve the growth and immune system of children. Adequate intake of these micronutrients is crucial for both the physical and cognitive development of children. The health juice drink has been approved by the Department of Health, through its Sangkap Pinoy Seal Program, and the Bureau of Food and Drug. Jus' 4 Kids Plus is available in 250 ml Tetra Brick at leading supermarkets including SM, Robinsons, Puregold, Shopwise, Waltermart, South, Landmark, Cherry and Ever and other secondary outlets.

### Marian Pilgrimage/Tour

FATHER CORSIE LEGASPI, A NOTED AND HIGHLY SOUGHT-after healing priest is heading a Marian Pilgrimage/Tour on Oct 8 to 19. As the group's chaplain, he will say masses and conduct healing sessions along the way. Notable places like Fatima, Lourdes and Rome, among others, will be visited. While in Rome, the group will seek an audience with the pope. For those interested to join call 809-0605 or 809-0764

### 'Teaching with a Purpose' conference

INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION SPECIALISTS OF MAKATI WILL hold a conference entitled "Teaching with a Purpose", to be held at the AIM Conference Center in Greenbelt Makati on Sept. 22. Aimed at grade school and high school teachers, college lecturers, subject area heads and school principals, the conference addresses the issue of student de-motivation and under-achievement when studying core curriculum subjects. The plenary speakers are all experts in their own fields and come from all around the world. Endorsed by DepEd all conference details are available at the International Education Specialists, call (02)819-1001/02. Topics on Math and Arts will be part of the conference and there will be a special session on career counseling. Participants will have the option of staying at the Taal Vista Hotel for the conference and joining the education exhibit for Calabarzon schools on Sept. 24-25. Registration is open until July 25, and participation by education and research students is also welcome.

### Sergio Osmena Sr. HS '83 reunion

ATTENTION ALL SERGIO OSMENA SR. HIGH SCHOOL (QC) batch '83 graduates. In connection with the batch's forthcoming Silver Jubillee (Batch 83 reunion) on February 2008, you are requested to get in touch with any of the following, Luz Hidalgo-Bautista (0917-5009697), Tess Margallo (0917-8142209) and Ammie Sanchez (4149113, 0927-2191288, 0920-8866669).

### Online auction innovation

BIDWISE OFFERS NEW PRODUCTS WITH A STARTING BID OF at least ten percent of the items' retail price. It also works on the premise of "lowest unique bid" as it encourages the bidders to bid wisely on the latest gadgets. Bidders do not have to pay in cash as it uses virtual cash called "gems" that can be loaded up using ISPx Bonanza, Pristontale and Bidwise cards that are readily available in the market. The denomination of the card is the actual number of gems that can be used to bid for an item. Each gem is equivalent to a peso. Only the joining fee is deducted from the total topped up amount. The site has an easy to follow step process. 1) You log on to www.bidwise.ph. 2) Create a Bidwise account by clicking Join Now. 3) Fill up the registration form, submit, verify and revert their e-mail. 4) Log in to Bidwise using your e-mail and password. 5) To bid, top up/load now with Bidwise, ISPx Bonanza or Pristontale Game Card. 6) Select the item of your choice. 7) Click bid now and submit. One of the best features of Bidwise is that it has an immediate response mechanism where it will tell you if your bid is "unique" or "unique but not lowest". The Bidwise winners are chosen by the program itself and are notified via e-mail and on-site posting. For more information, log on to www.bidwise.ph.

### Lowe Manila hires award winning ECD

AWARD-WINNING EXECUTIVE creative director Steve Clay joins Lowe Manila. Originally hailing from Toronto, Canada, Clay has held senior positions in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Sri Lanka and the Middle East. He joins Lowe Manila July 1, from Y&R Singapore, where he was regional creative director, Asia-Pacific. While there he handled major international accounts including ABN-Amro, Accenture and Caltex. As ECD at Publicis Malaysia, he landed the agency its first ever local, regional and international awards. Over 40 accolades were won at D&AD, Cannes, CLIO, One Show, AdFest, MC2 and the Kancils. Commenting on Clay's appointment, Lowe Manila's CEO Mariles Gustilo said, "We are delighted to have attracted an ECD of such international calibre as Steve to the agency. His kind of talent and experience suits our mix of regional and local blue chip accounts and will no doubt fuel our drive for creative excellence."

**SPECIAL PURPOSE VEHICLES FOR:**

Calamity & Disaster Areas,
Urban Areas/Remote Areas

**Slightly used 6x6 Truck Mounted**

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Cagayan de Oro City
Contact Nos: 088-8585986 ; 08822-735353
09176222171

## FMF DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

3rd Floor ALPAP I Building, 140 L.P. Leviste St., Salcedo Village, Makati City
Tel. No. (632) 817-1180 Fax No. (632) 840-4549

## NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF STOCKHOLDERS

Dear Stockholders:

Notice is hereby given that the regular annual meeting of stockholders of FMF Development Corporation has been reset to Monday, August 13, 2007 at 4:00 p.m. at the Ayala Hall, Makati Sports Club, L.P. Leviste Street corner Gallardo Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City.

Matters to be taken up in the meeting are, to wit:

1. Call to Order
2. Proof of Notice of Meeting and Determination of Quorum
3. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on November 24, 2006
4. Annual Report of the President for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2006
5. Ratification of All Acts of the Board of Directors and Officers during the year 2006
6. Election of Directors
7. Appointment of External Auditors for year 2007
8. Other Matters
9. Adjournment

(Sgd.) **ROBERTO V. SAN JOSE**
Corporate Secretary

(PDI–July 19, 2007)

## NOTICE OF AUCTION

**www.henrybutcher.com**

### HEAVY EQUIPMENT; TRUCKS; CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT; ETC.

Sale Date: Tuesday, July 24, 2007 at 10:30am
At: 1 Pearl St., Doña Juliana Subdivision; Bo. Ugong, Pasig City
On View: Monday, July 23, 2007 from 9am to 5pm
or earlier by appointment
Refundable Deposit: Php20,000 (upon registration)

HEAVY EQUIPMENT- LINKBELT SPEEDER LS 108 40 tons Crane; CLARK 125c Pay Loader; KOMATSU D60P Bulldozer; CATERPILLAR D6C Bulldozer; MITSUI DB2E Minidozer; MAZDA Backhoe; ISUZU Elf Backhoe; SAKAI 3-Wheeler Road Roller; KOMATSU JV-32 Vibro Roller YAMASAKI 10 Tons Cap. Vibro Roller; KUBOTA Mini Vibro Roller; INTERNATIONAL Tractor Head; 40 ft. High Bed Trailer; REO 5 Tons Cap. 10 Wheeler Truck; ISUZU 6x6 Cargo Truck; Semi Low Bed Trailer; ISUZU Dropside Pick-Up; KIA CERES Dropside Pick-Up; etc.
CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT & MATERIALS - BETONMATIC Batching Plant (60 cubic meter/hour); INGERSOLL-RAND 100 PSI Air Compressor; PERKINS 75 kva Genset; NISSAN SD-22 25kva Genset; Steam Generator; Cement Mixer; Mortar Pump Mixer; SHIN MEIWA Plastering Machines; Concrete Pipe Mould; Plate Bender; Mixing Silo; MITSUBISHI MA 400-E AC Arc Welder; Oxy-Acetylene Tank; Wheel Barrow, Steel Water Pipes; PVC Pipes; Steel I-Beam; Steel Angle Bars; Spiral Pipes; Steel Window Frames; Stainless Chemical Sprayer; etc.
MISCELLANEOUS - Vertical / Horizontal Steel Storage Tank; MC GRAW-EDISON 50 kva Transformer; KRER-500 43 kva Dry Type Transformer; ABB 37.5 Transformer; WESTINGHOUSE DT-3 75 kva Dry Type Transformer; Cardinal 15 kg Grad. Electric Weighing Scale w/ Control Panel; Gate Valves; Check Valves; Fuel Pumps; Flanges; Reducers; Elbows; Couplings; Asstd. Filters; Asstd. Bolts; Hydraulic Hoses; Asstd. Induction Motors; Asstd. Metal Scraps; 40' / 20' Container Vans; Electrical Items; etc.

### AUTOMOTIVE MAINTENANCE EQUIPMENT; CLASSIC CARS

Located At: 958 J.P. Rizal cor. P. Gomez St., Makati City
On View: Monday, July 23, 2007 from 9am to 5pm

**HESHBON 51G 3500 kg Car Lift; HUNTER 511 Wheel Balancer; RANGER Low Rise Lifts; HOFMANN Geodyna 1100; RAV G8LON Swing Tyre Changer; FORD Mustang (NEX-719); Suburban (UER-786); TOYOTA Corona (Parts Car); Vending Machine**

NOTE: Aforementioned equipment will be sold at Doña Juliana Subdivision. We strongly recommend that all interested parties conduct an ocular inspection

GoIndustry Henry Butcher
INDUSTRIAL ASSET DISPOSAL AND VALUATION

Contact: Mike Ramos
Tel: +63 2 822 5555 Loc. 129
mike.ramos@goindustry.com

## LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

1598 M. H. del Pilar corner Dr. J. Quintos Streets, Malate, Manila
Tel. Nos. 522-0000; 526-0100 connecting all departments

### INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Land Bank of the Philippines invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/ contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as stated below:

| Item / Description | Approved Budget |
|---|---|
| 1 Lot Supply, Delivery and Installation of 10 units Blade Server and 1 unit Chassis to be installed in the Bank's existing Dell Blade Server Rack | P2,500,000.00 |

The Bid Documents shall be available at the Procurement Department at the 25th Floor, LANDBANK Plaza, 1598 M. H. del Pilar cor. Dr. J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila starting July 19, 2007 upon payment of non-refundable fee of P1,300.00.

The Pre-Bid Conference shall be held at Procurement Department Conference Room at 2:00 PM, July 26, 2007. Bidding for the above requirement is scheduled on August 8, 2007 at 1:00 PM.

Please address your queries to the Head-Secretariat, Bids and Awards Committee, or call 405-7370; 551-0000 locals 2290 & 2293.

LANDBANK reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder(s).

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

(PDI–July 19, 2007)

## NOTICE OF AUCTION

**www.goindustry.com**

**Sale by Online Auction**

### PASTA, PEANUT BUTTER & FLOUR PROCESSING LINES

Closing: Thursday, 26 July 2007 - 18:00 CCT (Local Time)
Location of the Assets: Manila, Philippines

LONG AND SHORT PASTA PROCESSING - PAVAN Long Cut Line (1990); BUHLER Long Cut Line (1985); PAVAN Short Cut Line (1986); BUHLER Short Cut Line (1986); RICCIARELLI 22 Short Cut, RICCIARELLI 38 Long Cut Packing Machines; (22) Pasta Hoppers; LANDUCCI Pasta Die Washing Machine; Pasta Die Rack; Flour Re-drying System
PEANUT BUTTER PROCESSING - SIMAR Fat Melter (1999); BAUER Roaster; Blancher; Sorting Table; Peanut Mill; Bucket Elevators; Feeders; Degassing Tank; (2) Votators; CHERRY BORRELL Piston Filler; Stainless Steel Platform; Processing Pump; Wide Bottle Sealer; Shrink Tunnel
FLOUR PROCESSING - (5) 38T Cap. Flour Storage Silos; Flour Storage Support Frames; KEK GARDNER Pasta Grinder; (2) Sucker Pumps

VIEWING: STRICTLY BY APPOINTMENT
For more details please visit our website at www.goindustry.com & search for Pasta, Peanut & Flour Processing Lines

GoIndustry Henry Butcher
INDUSTRIAL ASSET DISPOSAL AND VALUATION

Contact: Chris Major
Tel: +63 2 822 5555
chris.major@goindustry.com

## ONLINE AUCTION

**www.henrybutcher.com**

On the instructions of STARLM, Dept. of Agrarian Reform Republic of the Phils.

### ONLINE AUCTION SALE
### 4 Land Rover Freelander Td4 2001 Model Sports Utility Vehicles

(Vehicles Require Attention. Please Inquire For Defect Details)

Sale Closing: Wednesday, 25th July 2007 at 18:00 CCT
Located: Kidapawan, Philippines

VIEWING: STRICTLY BY APPOINTMENT
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GoIndustry Henry Butcher
INDUSTRIAL ASSET DISPOSAL AND VALUATION

Contact: Dadas Serna
Tel: +63 2 822 5555 Loc 116
asia.questions@goindustry.com

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRADE AND INDUSTRY
BOARD OF INVESTMENTS
dti

## NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that **KENRICH DEVELOPMENT CORP. (Villa Ventura Subdivision-Bag-ong, Daan, Yati, Lilo-an, Cebu)** is applying for registration with the Board of Investments (BOI) as **New Developer of Mass Housing Project** on a **Non-Pioneer** Status with project site located at **Bag-ong Daan, Yati, Lilo-an, Cebu.**

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) **RUDY B. CAÑA**
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

Industry & Investment Building,
385 Sen. Gil Puyat Ave., Makati City Philippines
Tel.: (632) 897-6682 Fax Nos.: (632) 895-3521
(IPG) (632) 895-3981 (IG) (632) 895-3978 (TSG)
(632) 890-3051 (AD) E-mail: OSAC@boi.gov.ph
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Cable address: INVESTBOARD P.O. Box 1872 Makati

(PDI - July 19, 2007)

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"BREAK D' SILENCE"

## A musical concert

REMEDIOS AIDS FOUNDATION (RAF) ON ITS 16th year celebration, invites everyone to "BREAK d' Silence" d musical, featuring an assembly of Filipino performing artists rendering Broadway hit songs that evoke love care and understanding in the midst of a world affected by AIDS epidemic.

Break d' Silence d musical will be held on July 24, 7 p.m. at RCBC in Makati City. Proceeds of this event will support AIDS hotline project. For inquiries, call 524-09-24 / 524-48-31. Tickets are available at Ticketworld (891-9999) for P1,000.

### More Classified Ads

Commission on Elections ..... A13
Department of Labor-NCR ..... A15
PEZA-Bataan ..... A15
Metro Iloilo Water District ..... B3

# OBITUARIES

## VICKY LIABAN

*(January 25, 1970 – July 16, 2007)*
*of San Fernando City, Pampanga*
*died on July 16, 2007 after giving birth to a lovely daughter,* ***Kimberly Alicia.***

Her bereaved parents **Benito** and **Alice**; siblings **Wilbert, Aileen, Melanie,** and **Robert**; sister-in-law **Rowena**, brother-in-law **Bernard**, nephew **Raphael**, companion **Philip**, and other relatives request friends, acquaintances and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies at Angelica Chapel, Room 205, Sanctuarium, Araneta Ave. cor. Quezon Ave., Quezon City. A special Christian service and a tribute will be held on Friday, July 20 at 8 p.m. Cremation will be on Saturday, July 21 at 12 nn.

*In Loving Memory*

**First Death Anniversary**

## COL. CARLOS L. EUGENIO

(November 4, 1949 - July 20, 2006)

Holy Masses for his eternal peace and happiness will be offered at the following churches tomorrow, July 20, 2007:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| • Monasterio de Sta. Clara | - Katipunan Ave., Q.C. | - 6:00 am |
| • Transfiguration of Our Lord Parish | - 18th Ave., Cubao, Q.C. | - 6:00 am; 7:00 pm |
| • Santuario de San Pedro Bautista | - San Francisco del Monte, Q.C. | - 6:30 am; 6:00 pm |
| • Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene | - Quiapo, Manila | - 7:00 am; 8:00 am; 9:00 am; 10:00 am; 5:00 pm; 6:00 pm |
| • Sto. Domingo Parish | - Quezon Ave., Q.C. | - 8:00 am; 6:00 pm |
| • St. Ignatius Cathedral | - Camp Aguinaldo, Q.C. | - 9:00 am |
| • St. Joseph Parish | - Aurora Blvd., Q.C. | - 12 nn; 6:00 pm |
| • Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish | - 13th Ave., Cubao, Q.C. | - 6:00 pm |

We, the members of the family, request all his loved ones, relatives, friends and pious readers to join us in prayers for him.

*"Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the Lord has been good to me."* (Psalm 116:7)

**In Memory of our Beloved Grand Mother**

*Soledad "Choleng" San Miguel Cac*

on her 1st Death Anniversary this 19th of July 2007.

A Mass will be held at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City at 9:00 a.m.

# OBITUARIES

Our Dearly Beloved

## DRA. TAGUMPAY REYES ESGUERRA

*peacefully passed away in the Grace of our Lord on July 16, 2007 at the age of 90.*

Her daughter, nephews, nieces, grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul in heaven.

Her body lies in state at Chapel-B, La Funeraria Paz, Inc., Q.C.

Interment will be on Saturday, July 21, 2007 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass at La Loma Cemetery, Manila.

**For your Classified Ads requirements, call our Classifieds Advertising Hotlines:**
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899-4425; 899-4427;
897-8425 (Telefax)
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Makati:
892-5578; 811-4361;
811-4370
Kalaw:
528-0213; 527-3342
Megamall:
635-0219; 635-0220

**Notify family and friends of a loved one who had just passed away.**
*We accept death notices, announcing details of the person's wake and interment. For a very affordable fee you can reach out to everyone who have been a part of the life of your dearly departed. For more information, you may contact Inquirer Classifieds at (02)897 8425.*

# BUSINESS

## New vehicle insurance system on hold

### DOTC, Finance adopt interim measure

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION and Communication has agreed to temporarily put on hold its order implementing a new insurance system for motor vehicles.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves told reporters that he and Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza had agreed to suspend the implementation of the order until the conflicts on the vehicle insurance issue between the finance and transport departments were resolved.

The finance department earlier asked the DOTC to reconsider the new vehicle insurance system, which the nonlife insurance companies criticized for being disadvantageous to their industry.

Under DOTC Order No. 2007-28, vehicle owners should automatically have their comprehensive third-party liability (CTPL) insurance upon registration of their vehicles with the Land Transportation Office (LTO) and upon payment of registration and insurance fees.

The order, which was issued on July 15 and was supposed to take effect 15 days after the issuance, provides that there will be only one insurance company to handle all the vehicle insurance business. This order, according to the department, was in response to the worsening problem involving the rampant issuance of fake insurance policies. With only one insurance provider chosen by the DOTC itself, then sale of fake policies will be prevented.

But the Insurance Commission, an attached agency of the DOF, had opposed the system that allowed only one insurer to handle all the vehicle insurance business. The Insurance Commission said a monopoly would not benefit the public.

Earlier reports indicated that the DOTC had tapped National Reinsurance Corp., partly owned by the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), to be the sole provider of the CTPL.

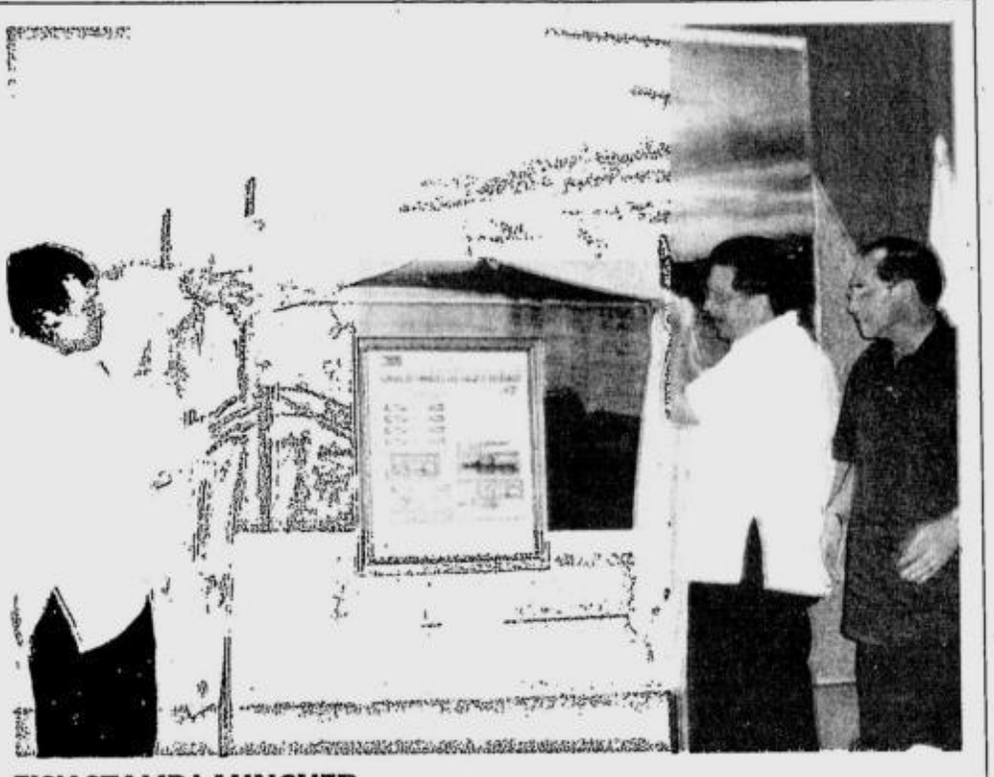
The Philippine Insurers and Reinsurers Association (Pira), which has more than 90 nonlife insurance firms as members, earlier said it would sue the DOTC should it push through with the implementation of the order. Pira said the DOTC order was unconstitutional, as it allowed a monopoly in the vehicle insurance business.

The DOF has taken the side of the Insurance Commission and Pira, saying it was in favor of a free market but that it should be properly regulated.

Under a system pushed by the Insurance Commission, vehicle owners would be given a free hand in choosing their insurance providers. To protect the interest of the public, the Insurance Commission would first verify the authenticity of the insurance policies issued by the insurers prior to registration with the LTO.

Teves said the DOTC and the DOF had agreed to implement an interim measure while the two departments were deciding which system to adopt.

"We're working on an interim solution right now. We are continuously talking to the DOTC until we can harmonize some of the divergent views but the interim solution seems to be satisfactory," Teves said.



**FISH STAMP LAUNCHED**
Agriculture Undersecretary Jesus Emmanuel Paras, Assistant Postmaster General Luis Carlos and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources director Malcolm I. Sarmiento Jr. unveil the "Fishes" commemorative stamp during the 60th anniversary celebration of the BFAR.

### Forex gains passed on to power users promptly, says Napocor

NATIONAL POWER CORP. YESTERday said the foreign exchange gains arising from the peso strengthening vis-a-vis various currencies were being passed on promptly to its customers in accordance with the rules and procedures of the Energy Regulatory Commission.

Napocor, which has substantial foreign loans and is importing billions of dollars worth of fuel, has been benefiting from the strengthening of the peso from 56 to $1 in 2005 to 46 to $1 in 2007. It reported forex gains of P78.74 billion for 2005 and P68.74 billion for 2006.

This raised concerns that Napocor might be holding on to its forex gains to window-dress its financial performance.

"This is inaccurate and untrue," Napocor president Cyril del Callar said.

"Napocor's financial gains are reported according to international accounting standards. Also, Napocor finances are audited by the (Commission on Audit)," Del Callar said.

Del Callar said Napocor had been complying with all the ERC regulations. Its financia ccounting procedures are subject ne scrutiny of the ERC, which disti hes financial accounting from re ory accounting.

Under regulato ccounting, Napocor's forex gains or losses are measured based on actual earnings or loss.

Current Napocor charges, Del Callar said, were reflective of the forex gains.

He cited the following pass-on reduction of charges to customers: Luzon: 74.25 centavos per kwh from March to August 2007 and 66.76 centavos per kwh from September to December 2007.

The Visayas: Grid reduction for forex is 16.79 centavos per kwh from March to May 2007.

Mindanao: Pass-on reduction of charges to customers is 3.04 centavos for March to October 2007. In Mindanao, Napocor generates power mainly from hydro power plants which do not consume imported foreign fuel. They are therefore less affected by forex fluctuations.

### Peso rise cuts costs of telcos

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE RISING PESO IS HELPING LOCAL TELEcom firms reduce their dollar costs, including foreign debts, and boost their respective subscriber base, the country's dominant carriers said in separate interviews.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone (PLDT) Co. president Napoleon Nazareno said the peso strengthening had brought down interest rates and indirectly contributed to the rise in subscriber numbers.

The rising peso helps improve the economy and enables more people to raise their incomes.

"This allows them to avail themselves of our services," he said.

Globe executive Froilan Castelo agreed that the stronger peso helped telcos since they earn in pesos and pay most suppliers and creditors in dollars.

Data from Smart Communications Inc. and Globe Telecom showed that their subscriber numbers reached about 40 million last year, up from 34.78 million in 2005.

Smart and Pilipino Telephone Corp. had 24.2 million subscribers. In 2006, Globe and Touch Mobile subscribers stood at 15.7 million.

Citing the strengthening peso, PLDT told the National Telecommunications Commission that it was planning to lower its foreign currency adjustment (FCA) rate by 11 percent for local services.

Phone firms are required to inform the NTC to submit a monthly update on currency adjustment. As a rule of thumb, every 10-centavo adjustment in the exchange rate translates to a one-percent increase or decrease in the company's rate base.

### Fil-Estate seeks new investors

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

FIL-ESTATE LAND INC. (FELI) IS AIMING TO raise P5 billion from possible direct investments from investors to help fund its property development projects, FELI chair Robert John Sobrepena said.

The plan has yet to be approved by the company's shareholders who will hold their annual meeting on Aug. 28.

In line with this plan, the company disclosed to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) that its board had approved an increase in its authorized capital stock from 5 billion shares to 10 billion shares.

The additional capital, upon full subscription by potential investors, represents about 30 percent in the company.

"We feel it is the right time to launch our projects. We have received overwhelming investor interest and we are increasing our capital to accommodate these potential investments," Sobrepena said.

He said there were big foreign and local groups that signified their interest to invest in Feli.

Sobrepena said the company would raise the amount through either an offering of shares or private placements.

Feli's landbank of 3,000 hectares are mostly in the Calabarzon area, particularly Batangas and Cavite.

Feli and Megaworld Corp. earlier agreed in principle to pursue as partners the development of 731 hectares of property in Laurel, Batangas into a residential resort community to be known as Twin Lakes.

Fil-Estate and Megaworld or its affiliates will infuse into the company P2 billion in property and cash.

### BSP tightens troubled banks' funding loophole

By Daxim L. Lucas

BANKS FACING LIQUIDITY PROBLEMS WILL have their access to central bank funds tightened after monetary authorities moved to close the loophole that has been abused in the past.

In a statement, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) said it would impose a collateral requirement on banks participating in its so-called overdraft credit line (OCL) which has been used in the past by troubled banks to help fund check clearing operations.

"The guidelines will allow banks participating in the clearing operations of Philippine Clearing House Corp. (PCHC) to apply for an OCL on a fully secured basis up to a maximum of 50 percent of their demand deposit liabilities or the loan value of offered collateral, whichever is lower," BSP Governor Amando M. Tetangco Jr. said in the statement.

The tightening of the central bank's overdraft window was approved by the policy-making Monetary Board during its meeting last week.

The new measure would take effect on Jan. 1, 2008, "to give banks sufficient time to align their clearing operations with the new policy," Tetangco said.

The central bank chief said the new policy measure "is intended to provide temporary liquidity assistance and to cover the BSP exposure in case the OCL is converted into an emergency loan."

The OCL is a short-term credit facility intended to tide over a bank experiencing an unexpected or higher-than-usual volume of inward transactions.

If tapped, it may be allowed to remain outstanding up to five consecutive days at an interest rate of one-tenth of 1 percent per day or the prevailing 91-day treasury bill rate, plus three percentage points, whichever is higher.

On top of the secured overdraft line, banks participating in the clearing operations of the PCHC will be given a clean overdraft line equivalent to 10 percent of their approved rediscounting line.

The central bank's tightening measures were made partly in response to past criticism that it had abetted the operation of weak banks by providing them with cheap funds through unsecured overdrafts, much of with were eventually converted into emergency loans later on.

The BSP stressed the new policy was not meant to replace existing facilities to help tide over the finances of problematic banks.

"It is not intended for the purpose of providing a credit facility which a bank experiencing liquidity problems may avail itself on a long-term or medium-term basis," Tetangco said.

Deputy Governor Nestor A. Espenilla added that the measure was also meant to protect the central bank's finances by giving it collateral protection from banks seeking additional liquidity.

"This is to prevent banks from incurring overdrafts on their demand deposit accounts to BSP," he said. "Without this, the BSP is exposed."

MindShare

**$1,000 worth of communications in Asia delivers...**

***Manila, 20 June 2007:*** A new survey from global media agency MindShare enables marketers to compare communications channel costs in 14 markets (12 in Asian, plus US and UK).

Bunny Aguilar, General Manager for MindShare Philippines said: ""The exponential explosion of channel choices to reach the target market right now means that brands need to make investment allocation decisions to assess ideas in a far more neutral position than we ever have before. This unique piece of research helps marketers do that, quickly; easily, by using a currency that the brain can easily process, $1000"

Channels covered in the research included TV spots, magazines, newspapers, radio, bus shelters, taxi ads, cinema, local celebrities for events, event promotion people, postcard ads, online display advertising, electronic direct marketing and keyword search advertising.

**What can you get for $1,000 in Asia?**

- 1,600 search clicks in Australia for 'used car' key words
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- More than 2 million prime-time TV viewers in India
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- 2.1 million newspaper readers in Malaysia
- 233 cinema spots in the Philippines
- 120,000 online finance readers in Singapore
- Reach US$9.5 billion of household GDP by television
- 4.5 million newspaper readers in Thailand
- 160 event promo people in Vietnam

**Seven key conclusions were drawn from the research:**

1. Emerging Asian markets still offer exceptional value for money
2. You get far more bang for your buck in India than you do in China
3. Asian media costs are local and irregular
4. Digital channels promise new levels of multi-market standardization
5. Cinema ad costs are under $10 in most Asian markets
6. Several developing Asian countries command high-cost outdoor premiums
7. You probably can afford 15 minutes of celebrity fame in Asia!

**For full details of research findings go to www.mindshareworld.com**

**For further information, please contact:**
**Bunny Aguilar**
**MindShare Philippines**
**+632 7293978**

Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

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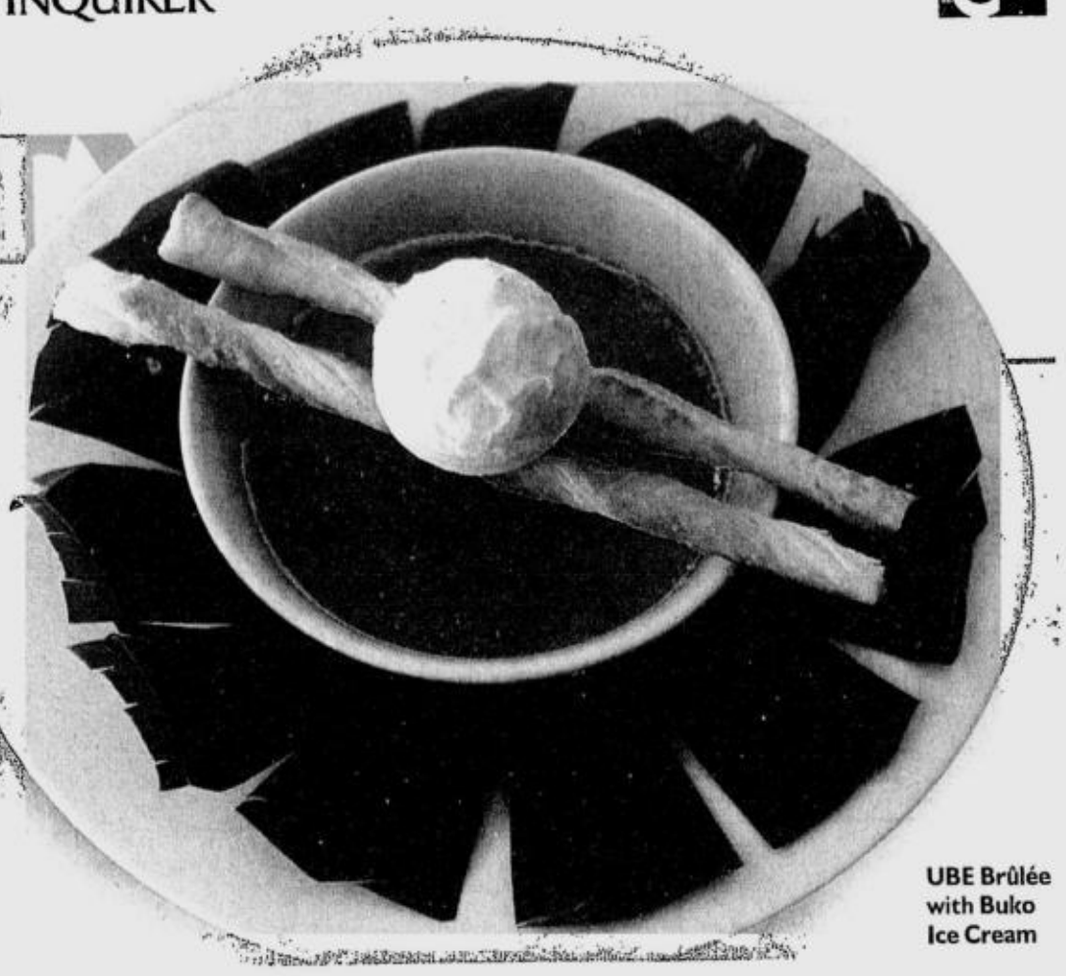
TUESDAY 2BU • THURSDAY FOOD •

CHEF Yaran shows off a concoction of Mandarin, Dalandan and Balsamic Jelly mixed with Fresh Strawberries.

Makati Shangri-La pastry chef Yusuf Yaran has a lot of fun reinventing classic desserts by using local ingredients



UBE Brûlée with Buko Ice Cream

# Turkish's delight

Text by Linda B. Bolido
Photos by Romy Homillada

TURKISH CHEF YUSUF YARAN is a man in love.

But unlike another Turk whose love story, lapped up by local entertainment media, has turned into a sordid soap opera, Yaran's love affair is likely to remain sweet and constantly full of surprises.

Yaran, executive pastry chef of the Shangri-La Makati Hotel, has fallen hard—for the *kalamansi*.

"It (*kalamansi*) is something out of this world. The smell, the taste... I use it to give different flavors," he enthuses. There is no doubt the guy is smitten.

He is also quite enamored with *dalandan*. Yaran says he uses *kalamansi* and *dalandan* zests in all sorts of things.

While Yaran reserves his most effusive comments for the *kalamansi* and *dalandan*, he has also had a lot of fun and excitement, in the few months he had been here, reinventing classic desserts by using local ingredients.

The desserts now lie side by side other haute cuisine pastries at the Shangri-La's daily buffet spread.

At the Circles Café, diners can now choose *ube* crème brûlée with *buko* ice cream, *labanos* sorbet, *dalandan* panacotta with caramelized pineapple and olive compote, *kalamansi* and carrot ravioli with *coco* sago and lime ice cream, *kalabasa* in syrup with double fresh cream.

Yaran also makes *durian* mousse for special events at the hotel.

For the chef who trained at L'Ecole Lenotre in Paris and Fabilo International in Switzerland, there is hardly any distinction between fruit and vegetable.

One dessert he has come up with uses both *langka*, another new discovery, and *durian* with the tomato as the centerpiece of the whole concoction. He fries and caramelizes the *langka* then uses it as stuffing for cooked tomato. He then infuses the tomato with *durian* juice.

While most foreign chefs—and even many local cooks—would stick to traditional ingredients, reluctant to tamper with proven formulas, Yaran does not let himself be bound by conventions and is always on the lookout for something that will allow him to tweak or reinvent familiar recipes.

He is so confident in his skills he scours wet markets for something different and interesting to give a new take to familiar items. He looks forward to discovering other native fruits and vegetables.

For Filipinos who have long been frustrated by the lack of international recognition for Filipino dishes, Yaran's creativity and pioneering spirit is certainly most welcome.

Though he has so far gone with the classics, injecting local materials into popular pastries, Yaran is also making plans to reinvent local delicacies.

He is already making plans for the *turon*, although he thinks there is still a lot of possibilities for the *saba* that's just waiting for someone like him to explore.

At the moment though, his immediate goal is to see newly harvested *ube* with his very own eyes. So far, he has seen the root crop only after it has been processed.

CARROT and Calamansi Ravioli, Coconut Sago, Lime and Calamansi Sorbet

### Ube Brûlée with Buko Ice Cream

**Ube Brûlée:**
7 egg yolks
200 ml whipping cream
100 ml fresh milk
75 g refined sugar
50 g *ube* jam

Mix the egg yolks, whipping cream, fresh milk and refined sugar in a bowl; whip by hand. Fold the *ube* jam into the mixture. Steam in the oven for 20-25 minutes at 175°C, or until firm.

**Buko Ice Cream:**
1 whole fresh *buko*
100 g fresh cream

TURKISH'S/ C3

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CEBU Juna 231 3254 0915 8797217
GREENHILLS Eleanor 7266505/7261526 0917 8261204
H.V.DELA COSTA Emily 8140138/8140151 0928 2107247
LEGASPI VILL. Lani 8938935 0928 9719938
MEGAMALL Ruby 6313869/6377543 0916 2479753
PASAY ROAD Maan 8871335/8873530 0915 6893088
PASIG Abbie 6815333/6473816 0928 4763108
SM NORTH Michelle 9295429/9264215 0905 2690717
SUBIC Beth 2526514 0928 6712299

## GARFIELD
BY JIM DAVIS

## A. LIPIN
BY JESS ABRERA

## BABY BLUES
BY JERRY SCOTT

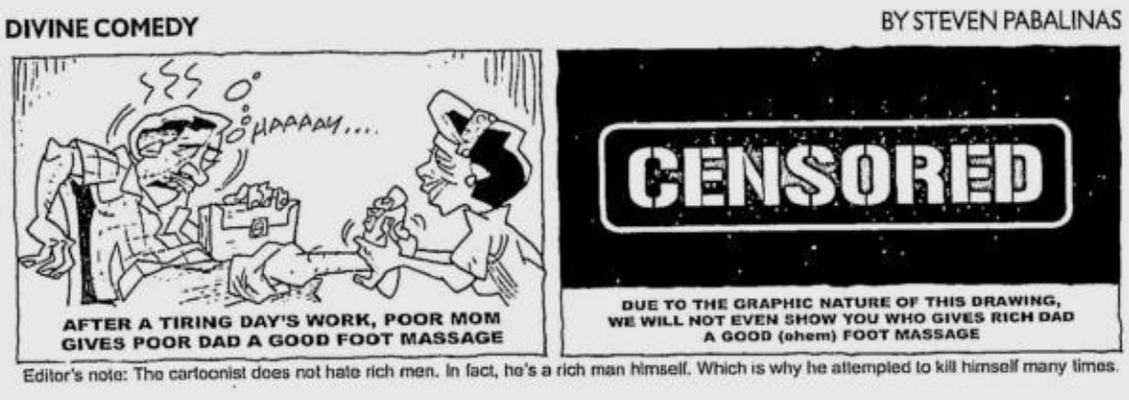
## PUGAD BABOY
BY P.M. JUNIOR

## MUTTS
BY PATRICK McDONNELL

## LOVEKNOTS
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

## ATOMO AND WEBOY
BY LYRA GARCELLANO

## DIVINE COMEDY
BY STEVEN PABALINAS

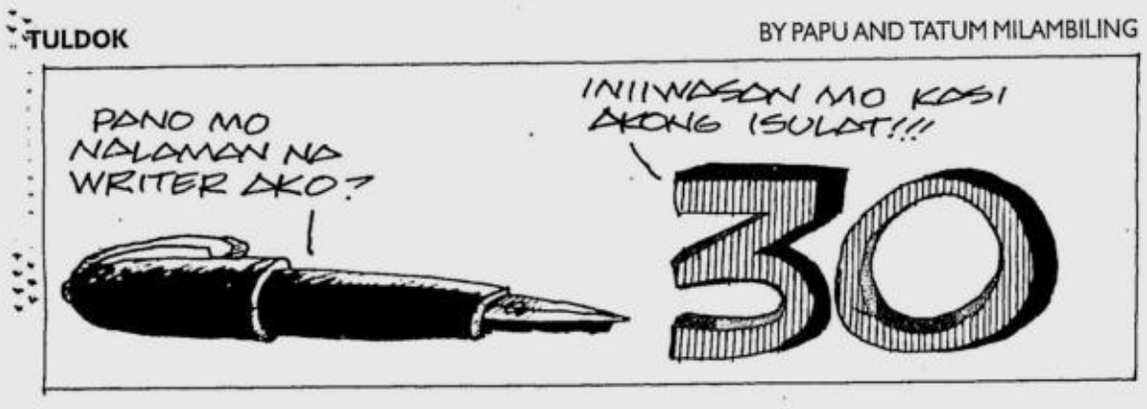



Editor's note: The cartoonist does not hate rich men. In fact, he's a rich man himself. Which is why he attempted to kill himself many times.

## KIKO MACHINE
BY MANIX ABRERA

## MIKROKOSMOS
BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

## TULDOK
BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

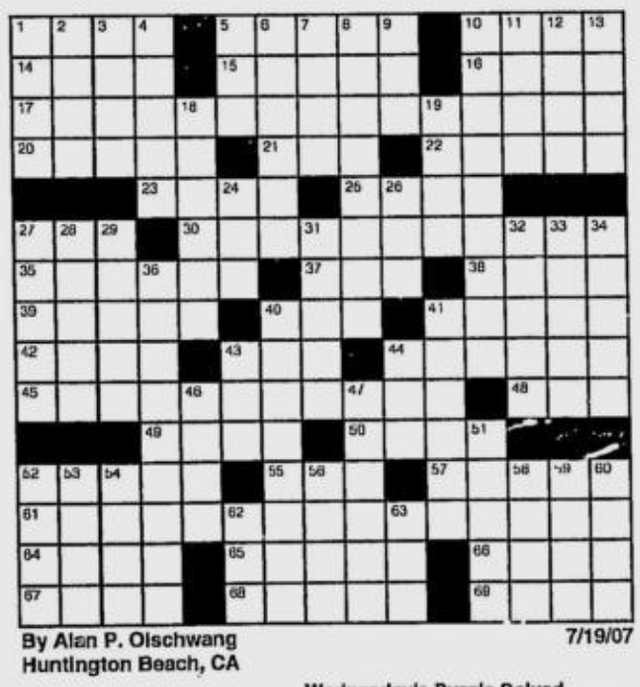



## BEN
BY DANIEL SHELTON

## DAILY CROSSWORD

**ACROSS**
1 Swindle
5 Steal
10 Flog
14 Asian desert
15 Assisted
16 Prime ranking
17 Start of Evan Esar quote
20 Melee
21 Stan of Marvel Comics
22 John of pop music
23 Rushed
25 Mop
27 Be obliged to
30 Part 2 of quote
35 Fruit ice
37 Spread over a surface
38 Cruising
39 Secret cache
40 Actor Holbrook
41 End of bread
42 Fashion maven Klensch
43 Base
44 Treat with an antiseptic
45 Part 3 of quote
48 Set the pace
49 Pesters
50 Type of duck?
52 Studio sign
55 Dec. 24th or 31th
57 Ice breaker, briefly
61 End of quote
64 Fateful day for Caesar
65 Of atomic number 56
66 Israeli port
67 Welshman, e.g.
68 Silly
69 Make over

**DOWN**
1 Some NCOs
2 Essential part
3 Be up against
4 Fielders' gloves
5 __ Clemente, CA
6 Brandishes
7 Cannes conception
8 Statue's base
9 Tokyo, once
10 Gypsum plaster item
11 Wilhelm of Cooperstown
12 Enthralled by
13 Exploited laborer
18 Jumped on one foot
19 Close by
24 Wolf down
26 With what motive?
27 Milo of "The Verdict"
28 Writer Virginia
29 Answering machine button
31 Cabbage salads
32 Ordinary
33 "Beau __"
34 Despised
36 Maximally muscular
40 Rider
41 Infinitely extended
43 Gam
44 Actress Claire
46 Greenery in Paris
47 Unsaturated hydrocarbon
51 Go in
52 Psych final?
53 Protuberance
54 First victim
56 "At This Moment" singer Billy
58 Roofer's supply item
59 Highway
60 Suspicious of
62 Kimono sash
63 Hot diamonds



By Alan P. Olschwang
Huntington Beach, CA
7/19/07

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | A | C | | R | E | C | A | P | | L | O | P | E | S |
| I | L | A | | O | N | A | I | R | | E | L | E | G | Y |
| R | E | V | I | V | A | L | M | E | E | T | I | N | G | S |
| A | R | E | T | E | | | | M | A | G | O | T | | |
| G | O | A | T | | C | A | M | E | T | O | | A | N | N |
| E | S | T | | F | A | R | A | D | | | T | G | I | F |
| | | | M | A | C | E | D | | E | N | R | O | L | L |
| | C | O | U | C | H | S | E | S | S | I | O | N | S | |
| C | A | P | O | T | E | | I | T | A | L | Y | | | |
| A | T | T | N | | | O | R | A | L | E | | R | C | A |
| P | O | I | | F | O | R | A | G | E | | M | E | A | D |
| | O | O | C | A | L | A | | | | E | A | G | R | E |
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| R | E | A | D | E | | G | O | A | L | S | | N | E | T |
| V | A | L | E | T | | E | R | N | I | E | | A | N | E |

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## HOROSCOPE

**YOU BORN TODAY:** You love beauty and are always aware of it in your surroundings. You're emotionally sensitive, and you respond to beauty with this same sensitivity. Personally, you spontaneously do things with grace and patience. You love your friends, and your friends love you. The year ahead might be one of the best years of your life! Dream big!
**Birthdate of:** Atom Egoyan, filmmaker; Anthony Edwards, actor; Vikki Carr, singer.

**ARIES (March 21 to April 19):** Just because you have ideas about how to improve things at work, don't be pushy in stating your case to others. People are reluctant to accept change.

**TAURUS (April 20 to May 20):** Parents must be patient with children today; romantic lovers must be gentle and patient with each other. There's a tendency to try to improve people, and no one wants to hear this!

**GEMINI (May 21 to June 20):** Your ideas about how to make improvements at home or within your family might be excellent, but people don't want to hear this today. Since timing is everything, wait until tomorrow to make your recommendations.

**CANCER (June 21 to July 22):** Avoid pushy arguments with others today. People want to hear themselves talk today—and they want to win any argument!

**LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22):** You're obsessed about something having to do with earning money or spending it today. Is there something you want to buy that you simply must have? Don't go overboard.

**VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22):** Feelings of jealousy or possessiveness might overtake you today. Don't give in to these because they will only make you miserable. (This passes quickly.)

**LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22):** Don't worry if you feel restless today or are full of self-doubt about something. This is just a quickly passing thing in the stars. Let it go. Tomorrow's a completely different day.

**SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21):** Discussions with friends or groups might go beyond the passionately energized level and become pushy arguments. Do avoid this. Don't try to persuade others to agree with you.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21):** Avoid nasty exchanges with bosses and parents today. Steer clear of these because they will accomplish nothing and will only create resentful feelings. Do something else.

**CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19):** People are intent on trying to persuade others to do things their way or think like they do today. That's why pushy arguments easily erupt. Avoid this kind of energy!

**AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18):** Stay away from arguments about shared possessions or different values. These will only get nasty, and it just isn't worth it. Postpone these discussions for another day.

**PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20):** Conversations with partners and close friends can easily become emotionally heated. Perhaps secrets are revealed. Perhaps someone is jealous. Cool your jets.

## CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

**Conceptis Sudoku** by Dave Green

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | | | | 9 | | | | 7 |
| | | 6 | | | | 5 | | |
| | 5 | | 3 | | 4 | | 8 | |
| | | 2 | | | | 4 | | |
| 7 | | | | 5 | | | | 2 |
| | | 9 | | | | 1 | | |
| | 3 | | 2 | | 6 | | 4 | |
| | | 8 | | | | 2 | | |
| 6 | | | | 3 | | | | 8 |

Difficulty Level ★★★ 7/19

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### HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 1 |
| 1 | 5 | 3 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 8 | 2 | 4 |
| 7 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 3 | 5 |
| 6 | 9 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 7 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 8 | 1 | 6 | 9 |
| 8 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| 5 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 8 |
| 2 | 7 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 9 | 6 |
| 4 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 1 | 2 |

Difficulty Level ★★★

COUNTRY COOKING
*Micky Fenix*

# Something about vinegar

ANYONE WHO WANTS TO RESEARCH on how much vinegar is used in an ordinary Filipino household has only to go to my home.

Every month we get a supply of *sukang* Paombong, the nipa palm vinegar from a town in Bulacan, and a gallon is always not enough. It is used for cooking and as dipping sauce, as sterilizer for salad greens and, occasionally, to satisfy my hankering for something sour to sip.

Sipping vinegar was a preoccupation of the older girls in the family. It was part of our game, as young girls, to display our whitened lips after our vinegar experience. I take comfort in the fact that some friends did the same in the past. That makes my siblings and me less weird.

These days, however, my throat has not been receptive to this sipping exercise. This weakness began when I was asked to sip aged balsamic vinegar some years back. I coughed for what seemed like an eternity.

Thank goodness that in one vinegar-tasting event of the International Wine and Food Society, we were taught that placing a cube of sugar between one's teeth while sipping will reduce the acidity. I was, thus, able to enjoy the different kinds of wine vinegar such as champagne that was used to flavor our fish *kinilaw* that day.

The quality of the vinegar used in cooking reflects on the food. I always tasted the difference when we had our supply of grade A coconut vinegar from my father-in-law in Leyte.

Fish *paksiw* is infinitely better when the vinegar is top notch. Even when you have the freshest fish, it will be wasted on acetic acid that poses as vinegar.

## Different sources

We have so many kinds of vinegar made from different sources. Pia Lim Castillo, in her paper presented at the 2005 Oxford Symposium on Food, enumerated these as from "saps of palm trees, sugar cane, fruits and alcoholic beverages."

She described in detail how vinegar is made from each of those. Coconut vinegar is made from the sap of the inflorescence or the flower-bearing stalk. Nipa palm and the sugar palm (*kaong*) produce sap from slashes made in their stalks. Vinegar from sugar cane is obtained from the juice that has been cooked then placed in jars to ferment.

How the sap was made to flow from the nipa stalk was demonstrated to Pia and me by the banks of a Bulacan fishpond. It involved kicking the stalk. We thought the tree must shed tears (sap) all right from all that kicking.

What has been branded as Paombong vinegar is made from this nipa sap. It has a tendency to darken because it contains iron. Pia wrote that the old folks said Paombong vinegar could not be pure if it did not darken.

With the *kaong* tree, sap is collected only from male trees. The flowering stalks are rocked to attract fruit flies and this signals that the time is ripe to tap the stalks. The brand name of one commercial *kaong* vinegar used the tree's scientific name, *Arengga Pinnata*.

Sukang Iloko is the other branded vinegar made from *basi*, sugar cane wine, that has turned sour. Pia said "tanbark and leaves are added to impart a different flavor and coloring."

Some people call this vinegar "balsamic" probably because of its dark color or to tell people that it is as good as that aged Italian vinegar.

## Newest vinegar

The newest vinegar version I got was made from *latundan*, a variety of banana that is my favorite. *Latundan* does not keep long and so it is great to know that it can reemerge as something else that tastes good as well. Ige Ramos, artist and book designer, gave me a gallon from his home province of Cavite.

A vinegar is enhanced by the addition of other ingredients.

PAOMBONG—vinegar fermenting in vats in Paombong, Bulacan

SINAMAK—Ilonggo *sinamak* vinegar all dressed up

The *sinamak* vinegar of Iloilo has ginger, garlic, galangal (blue ginger) and chili. It is a must-dip for chicken *inasal*, the achuete-colored slightly sour grilled chicken.

Today, groceries carry bottled vinegar with *siling labuyo* (bird's eye chili) floating in the liquid. Claude Tayag gave me his aged 6-year-old coco vinegar with so much *siling labuyo*. Just looking at it scares people who cannot stand hot food. He has huge *dama juanas* (demijohns) of vinegar fermenting in one corner of his house.

I was recently introduced to *pinakurat*, a vinegar said to come from Iligan. It is highly spiced, at least the one I tasted. The liquid is cloudy but I do not know what went into it. Pinakurat has traveled from its Mindanao home to Manila specialty markets.

For me, vinegar tasting should have *chicharon* because pork crackling is the best medium to taste different versions. The two times I have done this kind of tasting, every participant giggled because each felt guilty about enjoying the exercise.

It was particularly great when the *chicharon* came as big as a table for four with each guest breaking off a piece and dipping it into the particular vinegar they wanted to taste.

*E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com*

DINING OUT

## Chain's 52nd branch

TOKYO TOKYO, THE LEADING JAPANESE fast food chain in the country, opened recently its 52nd and flagship store in TriNoma, Quezon City. On the exclusive Tokyo Tokyo TriNoma menu are Just OnStik or OnStik Bento specials: Tonkatsu, Fried Gyoza, Fried Siomai, and Fried Squid Heads. Noodles include Pork Siomai, Charsu, and Chicken Teriyaki. The dim sum list includes Siopao Asado, Chicken Feet, Pork Spareribs, Steamed Gyoza, Steamed Siomai, Shrimp Dumplings, and Spinach Dumplings.

**CAFÉ MEDITERRANEAN** (tel. 8968625), which is marking its 12th year, is beginning to be known as the home of kebabs, gyros, hummus and pizzas. But it is also getting a reputation for impeccable service of international standards. The menu is characterized by authenticity, variety and vibrancy. It includes healthy Mediterranean food and dishes from the Middle East to Northern Africa. It has branches in Greenbelt 1, Rockwell, Alabang, The Podium, Robinson's Galleria and SM Mall of Asia. Visit www.thecafemediterranean.com.

**PORTICO 1771** (tel. 8560581) serves breakfast everyday 7:30-10:30 a.m. People having early morning meetings or family gatherings will find a quiet and comfortable venue in the Function Room that can comfortably sit as many as 20 people. For a minimum consumable amount of P4,000+, they will have free use of the restaurant's LCD projector. The menu was conceptualized by executive chef Vicky-Rose Pacheco to be healthy, unique and sumptuous. Portico 1771, a member of the Chateau 1771 Group of Restaurants is in Serendra, Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global City.

**CROWNE Plaza's** Seven Corners (tel. 6337222) presents "Eighth Wonder Corner" featuring gourmet sausages, kebabs and beers. The offer is part of the restaurant's daily dinner buffet at P1,150+ per person. Kids 6-12 years old get a special discount. Kids 5 years old and below dine for free.

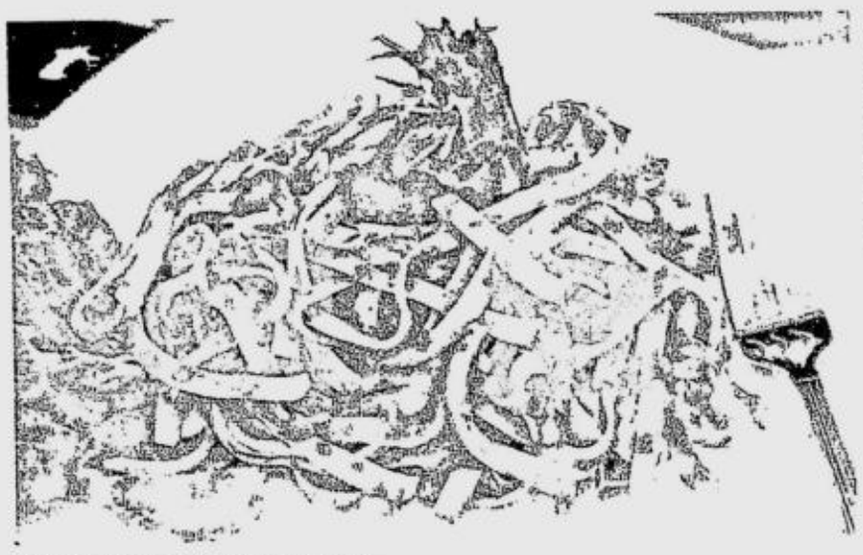
**HYATT Hotel and Casino's** Market Cafe (tel. 2451234) offers perfectly seasoned ribs prepared by chef Hubertus for the whole month of July. The Fireplace features Chanterelle mushrooms from France. Creations include Chanterelles with Fresh Organic Greens, Gratinated Chanterelles and Cream of Chanterelle Soup.

**C2 CLASSIC CUISINE** offers *merienda* specials like La Paz Batchoy, Pancit Malabon, Ginataang Pearl Barley at Maja and the Sapin-Sapin Souffle. The *merienda* specials are available until Aug. 20, 2-6 p.m. daily (6/L of Shangri-La Mall, Mandaluyong City, tel. 6361510 or 6361509).

**SUPER BOWL of China** (tel. 7378888) now offers homes and offices its Delivery Set Menus. The package includes 1.5 liter bottle of Pepsi and Lipton Iced Tea products. Groups have three set menus to choose from: 4-6 people, P769; 8-10 persons, P1,300; and 10-12 people, P1,700. All prices are exclusive of 10-percent delivery charge.

**BLUE BAY** buffet by the bay Restaurant (tel. 4007436, 4007437 or 5250514) launched recently its Brazilian barbecues as a premium add-on to its international buffet. Aside from beef, pork and chicken, squid is also barbecued using special metal skewers. Blue Bay offers the Rainy Day promo until September. For P385+, guests can have Brazilian barbecue and the buffet, including crab, Tuesday-Sunday. Its Monday Special brings the buffet price down to P344+. Choices include baked mussels. Blue Bay is at the corner of South Road (TM Kalaw Ave.) and Parade St., Rizal Park, Ermita, Manila.

TOKYO Tokyo TriNoma exclusives—Asian fusion dim sum



**MAGAZINE'S BEST RESTO**
**Café Bennisimo, named as Philippine Tatler's Best Restaurant for 2006, offers authentic Italian cuisine using the finest ingredients. The restaurant has contemporary Italian interior design and features a live band. Bestseller is Shrimp El Diablo pasta. Café Bennisimo is at 2/F, City walk 2, Eastwood City; 6876084 and (text) 0917-8EWCITY.**

# Roast chicken & Pinoy merienda

THE REGGIE ASPIRAS SCHOOL OF CULINARY Arts is offering the following classes:

July 20—Roast Chicken Collection '07 (all new): Apple Chicken with Apple Rice, Moroccan Chicken Roast with Couscous, Cilantro Honey Chicken with Curry Noodles, Supreme Herb Toast Chicken with Mustard Butter and Onion Marmalade, Garlic Chicken with Creamy Garlic Pan Gravy and Bacon Aioli with Mushroom Rice

July 21—New Age Pinoy Merienda Buffet (special class, all new): Bagnet Arroz Caldo with Tofu and Vigan Longganisa Crisps; Tablea Champorado Risotto with Churros and Ukoy; Pancit Luglug with Tokwa't Baboy, Balsamic Dinuguan with Brown Sugar Steamed Cheesecakes; Pandan Sago and Maize con Guinataan with Stuffed Bilo-Bilo, Halo-halo Salad, Ube-Pandan Maja Blanca. Call 9289296, 9273008 or 6335162.

NATHANIEL'S Buko Pandan

# So very well

From page C4

gelatin, just the right bite. Alexie Claparols, thanks for sharing this with me (tel. 045-9617171 or 045-9616817, Manila distributor; delivery days are Fridays).

Who would have thought that the best Belgian Lace Cookies could be had in Cebu at Les Chocolateries? In semisweet, mint, dark and white chocolates, they could very well pass as European (tel. 0917-6220427 or 7194476, Manila distributor).

## Chicken 'tinola'

**Why is my *tinola* always tasteless? Every house I go to has better *tinola* than mine. Please help.**

EILEEN, A NEWLYWED

*Tinola* is one of the simplest to prepare but there are exceptional ones and those that look petrified, *dahil sa putla*, the ones with clear stock!

This is how I do mine. Follow this and your husband will marry you again and again and again!

Heat 2 tbsp oil. When oil is hot add 1 whole chicken (cut up) and cook until slightly brown. About 15 minutes. This gives the *tinola* more depth.

Remove chicken. Saute 6 cloves garlic, smashed; 4 ginger slices, julienne; 1 onion, thinly sliced until fragrant.

Return chicken pieces. Add 1 tsp whole peppercorns.

Put enough water to cover chicken. I mean just enough to submerge them not drown them or you'll lose out on the flavor. Bring to a boil and lower heat to simmer. Cook over very low heat 20 mins.

Add green papaya or *sayote* and cook until tender. Season to taste with *patis*.

Add greens, *malunggay* or *dahon ng sili*. I like the flavor chili leaves lend to *tinola*. Put as much of it as you want. Season to taste with fish sauce.

Your *tinola* will have a nice deep, rich color and a complex flavor with a nice full-bodied stock.

*E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph*

# Turkish's delight

From page C1

300 g fresh milk
75 g refined sugar
12 fresh eggs
1 drop vanilla extract

Shred the fresh *buko* meat. Mix the *buko*, fresh cream, fresh milk, refined sugar, eggs and vanilla extract. Heat in a double broiler until it reaches 81°C. Set aside to cool. Pour into the ice cream maker, and keep it churning for 10 minutes. Store this in freezer until serving time.

**Assembly:**

Sprinkle the top with half a teaspoon of refined sugar and brown sugar. Glaze using a blow torch. Top with puff pastry sticks rolled in sugar and a scoop of Buko Ice Cream.

Makes one serving.

## Filipino Inspiration

(*Langka* and *pandan*-stuffed tomatoes roasted in *dalandan*, infused with *durian*, served with *ube* sorbet)

Tomato shells
5 pc fresh tomato
300 g sugar
1 pc vanilla stick
Zest of 3 pc *kalamansi*
1 liter *dalandan* juice

Wash the tomatoes, remove the green stalk. Blanch in boiling water for five seconds and quickly transfer to iced water. Peel the tomatoes and slice in half. Cook sugar in a heavy base pan with vanilla stick until caramelized. Add the *kalamansi* zest and *dalandan* juice, and let it simmer for 15 minutes. Cook the tomatoes in simmering mixture for 15 minutes, then remove. Set aside the tomato mixture.

**Filling:**

150 g *langka*
10 g *pandan* leaves
100 g refined sugar
100 g whipping cream
500 g *durian* juice

Cook sugar until caramelized. Add whipping cream and cook for 5 minutes. Add the *langka* and *pandan* leaves, and cook for 15 minutes more. Remove the *pandan* leaves.

Stuff the tomatoes with this filling. Place in a deep baking dish, bake at 130°C for 2 hours. Pour the liquid from the tomato mixture until roasted well.

Simmer the *durian* juice until reduced by 75 percent. Set aside until service time.

**Sorbet:**

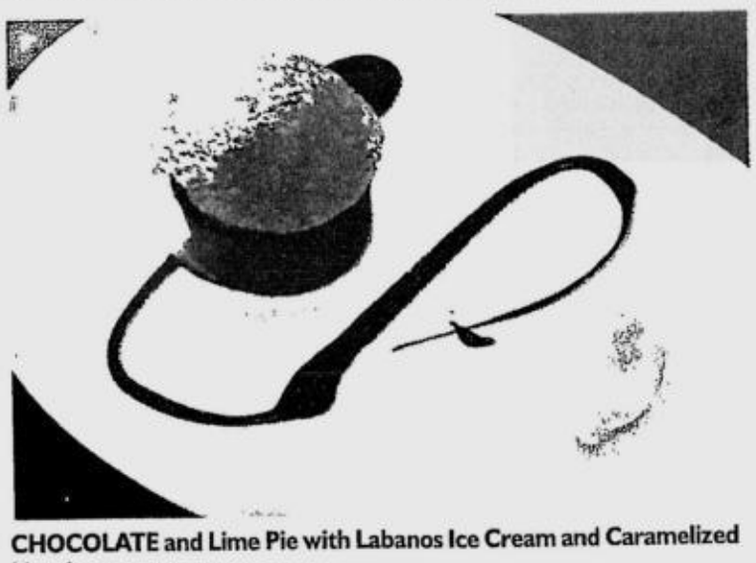
500 g *ube* puree
250 g sugar syrup

Mix the *ube* puree and sugar syrup. Pour into the ice cream maker, and keep it churning for 15 minutes. Store this in freezer until service time.

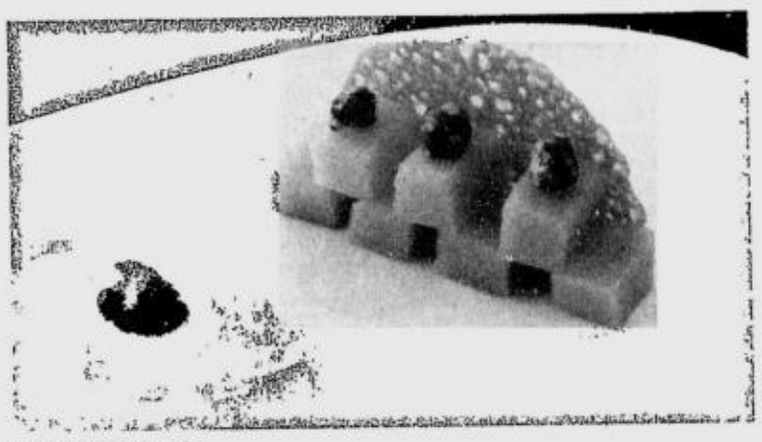
**Assembly:**

Take the stuffed tomatoes and inject the *durian* reduction. Drizzle over some of the leftover tomato mixture. Serve with *ube* sorbet on the side. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Makes five servings.



CHOCOLATE and Lime Pie with Labanos Ice Cream and Caramelized Hazelnut



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August 1-2 (Wed.-Thu.)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. CAKE DECORATING COURSE I by: Heny Sison P4,000

August 1-2 (Wed.-Thu.)9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. CAKE DECORATING COURSE II by: Heny Sison P4,000

August 2 (Thursday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. INTRODUCTION TO JAPANESE COOKING by: Chef Koichi Kondo P2,500

August 6-10 (Mon.-Fri.)9:00 a.m. – 12.00 noon CAKE DECORATING COURSE III by: Heny Sison Full participation. Prerequisite: Cake Decorating Course 1 & 2. This completes the Master Course in Cake Decorating. P8,000

August 6-10 (Mon.-Fri.)9:00 a.m. 12:00 noon GUMPASTE FLOWER MAKING by: Heny Sison P5,000

August 6-10 (Mon.-Fri.)1:00 – 4:00 p.m. ADVANCED CAKE DECORATION by: Heny Sison Prerequisite: MASTER IN CAKE DECORATION. Full participation. P10,000

August 6-10 (Mon.-Fri.)9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. LAMBETH CONTINENTAL COURSE (The Ultimate in Cake Decorating) by: Heny Sison P10,000

August 6 (Monday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m.NEW CLASS! SOMETHING FISHY by: Chef Carrie Madrid P1,600

August 7 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. MANY WAYS TO COOK CHICKEN by: Chef Aileen Anastacio P1,800

August 11 (Saturday)9:00 a.m. -12:00 noon HOME MADE ICE CREAM AND DESSERTS by: Jacqueline H. Alleje P1,850

August 11 (Saturday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m. NEW CLASS! EUROPEAN SWEET AND SAVORY TARTS by: Jacqueline H. Alleje P1,700

August 13 (Monday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. KOREAN COOKING I by: Chef Cecile Park P2,500

August 13 (Monday)9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. EASY CHINESE FAST FOOD 3 by: Chef Katherine Sion P1,950

August 13 (Monday)1:30 – 5:00 p.m. CHINESE VEGETARIAN MEALS II by: Chef Katherine Sion P1,950

August 14 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.CHOCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS by: Chef Vivian Syyap P2,250

August 14 (Tuesday)9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. FOOD CART IV - HOUSE OF ENSAYMADA by: Chef Vicki Villanueva P2,600

August 15 (Wednesday)10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. BASIC FLOWER ARRANGEMENTS by: Glenn Remorca P2,500

August 16 (Thursday)9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. ITALIAN PIZZA WORKSHOP by: Heny Sison P1,700

August 16 (Thursday)9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. POPULAR CHINESE FOOD FOR CATERING 3 by: Chef Katherine Sion P1,950

August 16 (Thursday)1:30 – 5:00 P.M. DIMSUM III by: Chef Katherine Sion P2,000

August 17 (Friday)9:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. NEW CLASS ! CALIFORNIA STYLE PIZZA WORKSHOP by: Heny Sison P1,700

August 18 (Saturday)10:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m. HEIRLOOM-1 RECIPES AND SIGNATURE CATERING DISHES MODULE by: Chef Sam de Leoz P2,000

August 20 (Monday)9:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m. BASIC CAKES & ICINGS FOR BEGINNERS P1,500by: Heny Sison

August 20 (Monday)2:30 – 5:00 p.m.BROWNIES & BARS by: Heny Sison P1,500

August 20 (Monday)9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m CHINESE SEAFOOD SPECIAL II by: Chef Katherine Sion P2,000

August 20(Monday)1:30 - 5:00 p.m.(classroom B) NEW CLASS! PINOY PAMBAHAY SERIES 4 by: Chef Katherine Sion P1,950

August 21 (Tuesday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.HEALTHY GOURMET - SOUTH BEACH DIET PHASE 1 by: Jacqueline H. Alleje P1,650 plus P700 recipe booklet for Phase 1

August 21 (Tuesday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m HEALTHY GOURMET – SOUTH BEACH DIET COMBO CLASS PHASE 2 and 3 by: Jacqueline H. Alleje P1,650 plus P700 per recipe booklet

August 21 (Tuesday)9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. TECHNIQUES OF FINE COOKING II (Featuring Roasting & Baking) by: Chef Vicki Villanueva P2,850

August 22 (Wednesday)10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.WAFFLES, CREPES AND PUFFS by: Chef Jacqueline Ang-Po P1,800

August 23 (Thursday)9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.BAKED PASTAS by: Chef Aileen Anastacio P1,800

August 23 (Thursday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m.PASTA GALORE by: Chef Aileen Anastacio P1,800

August 23 (Thursday)9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.BAKING! by: Heny Sison P1,500

August 24 (Friday)9:00 – 1:00 p.m. BROWNIE COLLECTION by: Heny Sison P1,500

August 24 (Friday)2:00 – 5:00 p.m. SPECIAL COURSE ON COOKIES by: Heny Sison P1,500

August 25 (Saturday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.JEEPNEY, BUS STOP AND CARINDERIA GOURMET FOOD by: Chef Sam de Leoz P1,950

August 27 (Monday)1:00 – 5:00 p.m NEW CLASS ! VIETNAM COOKING by: Carrie Madrid P1,500

August 27 (Monday)9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. JAPANESE RICE TOPPINGS by: Chef Koichi Kondo P1,700

August 27 (Monday)1:30 - 5:00 p.m.SUSHI CLASS by: Chef Koichi Kondo P1,700

August 28 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. SPECIAL TABLE AND HOME DECOR FLOWER ARRANGEMENT by: Glenn Remorca P3,000

August 28 (Tuesday)10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. MEAT PROCESSING I by: Chef Vicki Villanueva P2,800

August 29 (Wednesday)10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. THE ARTFUL CUPCAKE by: Chef Jacqueline Ang-Po P1,800

August 31 (Friday)10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.JAPANESE COOKING II by: Chef Koichi Kondo P1,700

August 31 (Friday)8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. HOUSE OF CHEESECAKE by: Chef Vicki Villanueva P1,950

August 31 (Friday)1:15 – 5:00 p.m.THE ART OF MERINGUE by: Chef Vicki Villanueva P1,950

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... GREEN TEA Cheesecake

KITCHEN RESCUE
*Reggie Aspiras*

# So very well

AS I SAT IN KOZUI, UPON THE recommendation of good friends Penk Ching and Dennis Hipolito, I was fooled into thinking that I was in a hip "concept" tea house in the heart of Tokyo.

Scanning through their visually perfect menu, I was convinced that Kozui was a Japanese franchise or, at least, Japanese-national owned. But sometimes, what seems obvious is not.

What a pleasant surprise it was for me to see Anthony So, grocery bags in tow!

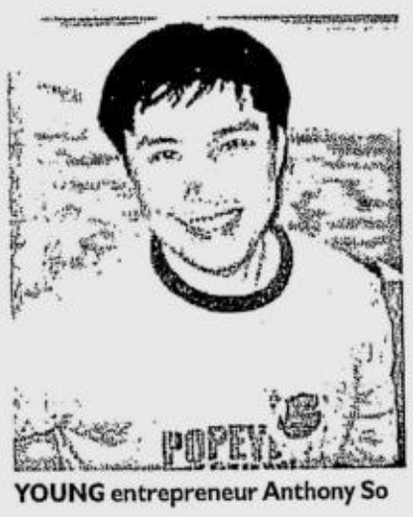
Straight off his stint as graphic artist in Shanghai, So came home armed with a thought. "*Bakit wala pang* green tea shops *sa* Manila?"

Anthony, an Architecture major and freelance graphic artist who incidentally loves to cook, single-handedly scribbled his dreams to reality. And when I say single-handedly, I mean that with no exaggeration.

He himself designed the tea house; did the interiors; graphically designed and photographed the menu; conceptualized, experimented and styled the food, which is Japanese fusion, by the way; did merchandising of the little tea trinkets being sold; and, to boot, personally manages the whole operation to this day! Beat that!

Fortunately, we were a large group so we were able to try practically everything on the menu.

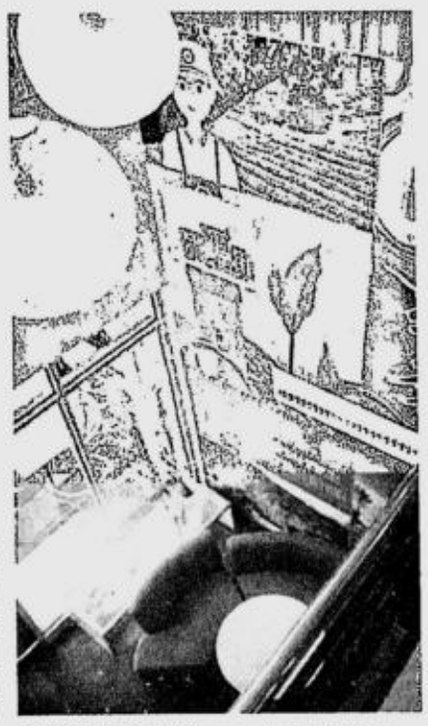
I personally found the tempura salad with creamy wasabi dressing; the cold noodle salad; *takoyaki*—grilled tako balls with *tako*, *ebi* and *negi*; green tea cheesecake; and *anmitsu*—shaved ice with green tea jelly, *dango* balls, *azuki* beans, taro jam with soft serve green tea or vanilla ice cream—to be very good.


YOUNG entrepreneur Anthony So

The beverage concoctions are enough to confuse: *sencha*, *genmachai*, *kukicha* or *matcha* tea, organic or not; hot or cold; blended or stirred; with lemon, cream or milk. They even have Korichio, So's take on the famous Frapuccinno.

Indeed, at 29 years old, So has done well. So, so well!

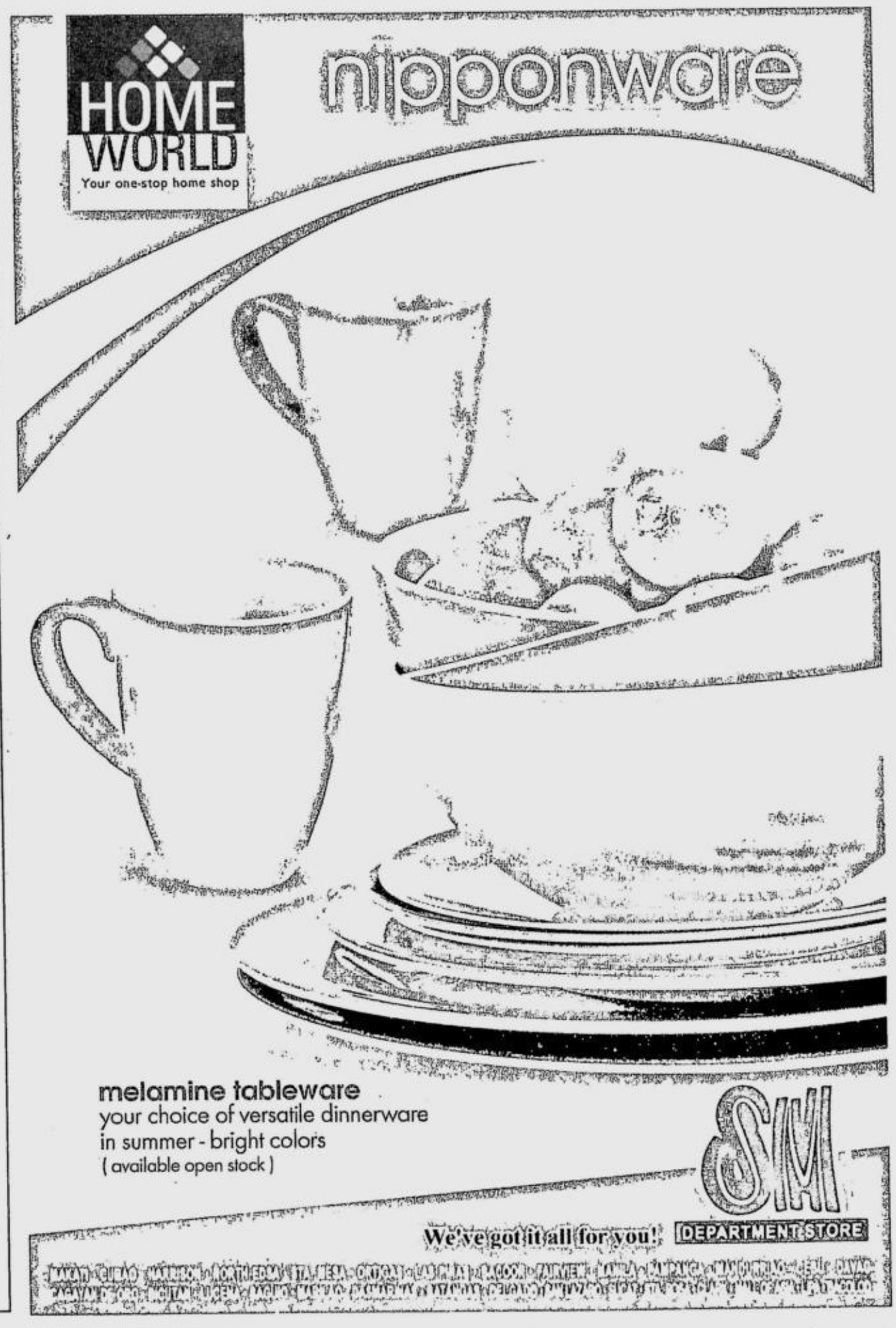
Kozui Green Tea, a fabulous concept without hurting the pocket, is located at 258 B Tomas Morato, QC (tel. 4132705).


REFRESHINGLY green interiors at Kozui

## Among my best finds

It's quite difficult to imagine how something as simple as *buko pandan* could be so decadent. Nathaniel's is! The cream mixture is so rich, likely tinged with carabao's milk, and the

SO VERY/ C3

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

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# On the brink of global fame

Reuben Laurente is all set to compete in 5 divisions of the 'Talent Olympics'

By Cora Lucas

REUBEN LAURENTE IS OUT TO DO a Jed Madela.

After two albums as a solo artist, the former gospel singer is once again set to test his limits. This Sunday, Reuben leaves for Hollywood to compete in the World Championships for the Performing Arts (WCOPA, July 28 to Aug. 5). He will compete with participants from over 50 countries in five divisions, the maximum number of categories for any single contender.

"I believe this will be a good year for Filipino artists again," says Reuben, who decided to go it alone after 14 years with The CompanY. "We'd like to repeat what Jed Madela did two years ago, making the country proud."

Jed won six golds in what is known as the "Official Talent Olympics" for performers and entertainers. In the end, he bagged the 2005 WCOPA Champion of the World and Grand Champion of the World titles, besting 3,000 contestants.

## Song choices

This year, Reuben leads the Filipino delegation, which includes "Born Diva" grand prize winner Raki Vega, "Little Big Superstar" finalist Aria Clemente, "Philippine Idol" finalist Reymond Sajor, 2006 Manhunt International semifinalist Iago Raterta and the Zamboanga-based Revelation band, composed of vocalists Emmanuel, Jerushalmai, Jeremiah and Isaac Calisang, and guitarist Bobby Piedad. They were all handpicked by WCOPA national director Carlo Orosa.

Reuben's song choices for the competition are: Sandi Patty's "They Could Not," arranged by Paulo Zarate (gospel category); Alan Menken's "Out There" from "The Hunchback of Notre Dame," arranged by Arnel de Pano (Broadway); Ira and George Gershwin's "Summer Time," arranged by Gino Cruz, (R&B/jazz); Barry Manilow's "Every Single Day," arranged by Homer Flores (pop); and the traditional Visayan folk song "Dandansoy," arranged by Ruth Rocabo Bagalay (World Music).

At the delegates' fund-raising concert last month at the Teatrino in Greenhills, Reuben charmed the audience when he sang two of his contest pieces. He recalls that someone in the audience, probably used to watching him harmonize with a group, was surprised that he could hit the high notes.

"I've been working out," the soloist says about his preparation routine. "Singers are like athletes. We need stamina when we sing. I've also been listening to all types of music—lately, a lot of Bobby McFerrin, who sang 'Don't Worry, Be Happy.' He uses his voice to do percussion [sounds]. Maybe I could use [that for] 'Dandansoy.'"

Reuben says the arrangement always makes a lot of difference in his song styling, the very reason he was so careful about choosing his arrangers.

"Some people told me to just concentrate on one genre," says the versatile artist, who counts Brian McKnight, Stevie Wonder, Luther Vandross, McFerrin and Nonoy Zuniga among his influences.

"But I'd like to think I can show something above the average. An artist is an artist only if he embraces [the craft]."

Fact is, Reuben aims to soar as high as his voice can reach.

After the WCOPA, he is set to work on a fourth album due for an early 2008 release. He already has three recordings—"Reason for This," a gospel album, released in 1990 and now on CD format; "Langit," a Catholic Mass Media Awards nominee for Best Inspirational Album released in 2005; and "Pop Virtuosity," released in 2006, and nominated for seven Awit Awards.

## Dream project

Reuben is thrilled to have been named one of Awit Awards' Best Male Vocalist nominees, along with Gary V, Top Suzara and Mon David. "*Pag nanalo, mas* happy [*ako*]," he says.

The singer, who holds a degree in Interior Design from the University of the Philippines, represented the country in

ON THE BRINK/ D2

# How to take a break

MICHEL HAZANAVICIUS AND HIS GIRLfriend Berenice Bejo—director and female lead star of the hit French Bond film "OSS 117"— took time off from promoting their movie to visit Makati slums on Saturday.

Specifically, they visited beneficiaries of the Virlanie Foundation, a private child-caring institution.

The comedy-action movie, about a gay secret agent, won awards in the Seattle and Tokyo International Film Festivals. It opens in Manila next week. *AFP*

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# Requiem for a teacher

FE BOLADO: "Always smiling."

PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARY ANGEL ALIM

Suicide Fe Bolado is remembered in new docu by 'Imelda' filmmaker

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

"HER SMILING EYES."

That, Filipino-American filmmaker Ramona Diaz told INQUIRER Entertainment, is her outstanding memory of her first meeting with Fe Bolado—one of the teachers featured in the new documentary, "The Learning."

The docu, Diaz's follow-up to the award-winning "Imelda," tackles the migration of Filipino educators to Baltimore, Maryland. It is set to premiere at the Sundance film festival in January next year.

"Fe was tall, and had long hair," Diaz recalled. "She was hard to miss—she had such presence."

## Math teacher

Bolado's was the second face that previewers saw in a rough cut of the docu. For Diaz's camera, she gleefully recalled that an American colleague had once suggested that she buy a mask. "It was because I was always smiling," Bolado explained. "Even when I was mad, my students still thought I was happy."

Later in the docu, Bolado waxed optimistic about the future, candidly telling the camera that she was looking forward to the first day of the next school year. "And the year after that ... and the year after that," Bolado said, beaming.

"She struck me as very bright and confident," said Tony Gloria of Unitel, which is co-producing the docu. "I heard that she had been a scholar in a top university. She taught mathematics. I thought she was someone who could easily adjust to life in the US."

Added Rhea Espedido, one of Bolado's fellow teachers in Baltimore, "Everyone was surprised. She was *masayahin* (jolly) and hyper."

On May 25, Bolado was found dead in an apartment she had shared with two other teachers. She had committed suicide.

At this interview in Manila recently, Diaz was still unsure as to how she would incorporate Fe's passing into the film. "I will decide in the editing room," the filmmaker said.

Gloria volunteered that Diaz was deeply saddened by the tragedy. "At first, she wanted to quit," he said.

Diaz admitted, "Fe became my friend, as I had become friends with all the teachers [featured in the docu]."

"After Fe's death," Espedido recounted, "Ramona didn't want to be alone; she slept over at our place."

"It affected the entire Filipino teachers' community," Diaz pointed out. "We also worried about the possibility of a backlash, that US school officials

REQUIEM / D2

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1 HARRY POTTER: ORDER OF THE PHOENIX MTRCB GP 1:15, 4:10, 7:05, 10:00
2 HARRY POTTER: ORDER OF THE PHOENIX MTRCB GP 12:15, 3:10, 6:05, 9:00
3 VACANCY MTRCB R-13 1:20, 3:30 5:40, 7:50, 10:00
4 TRANSFORMERS (GP) 12:30, 6:30 DIE HARD 4.0 (PG-13) 3:30, 9:30

PREMIERE THEATRE HARRY POTTER: ORDER OF THE PHOENIX 12.45, 3.40, 6.35, 9.30

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| TRANSFORMERS G 1:25,4:20,7:15,10:10 | PLANET TERROR R13 1:10,3:25,5:40, 7:55,10:10 | HARRY POTTER AND THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX G 2:05,4:40,7:35,10:30 |

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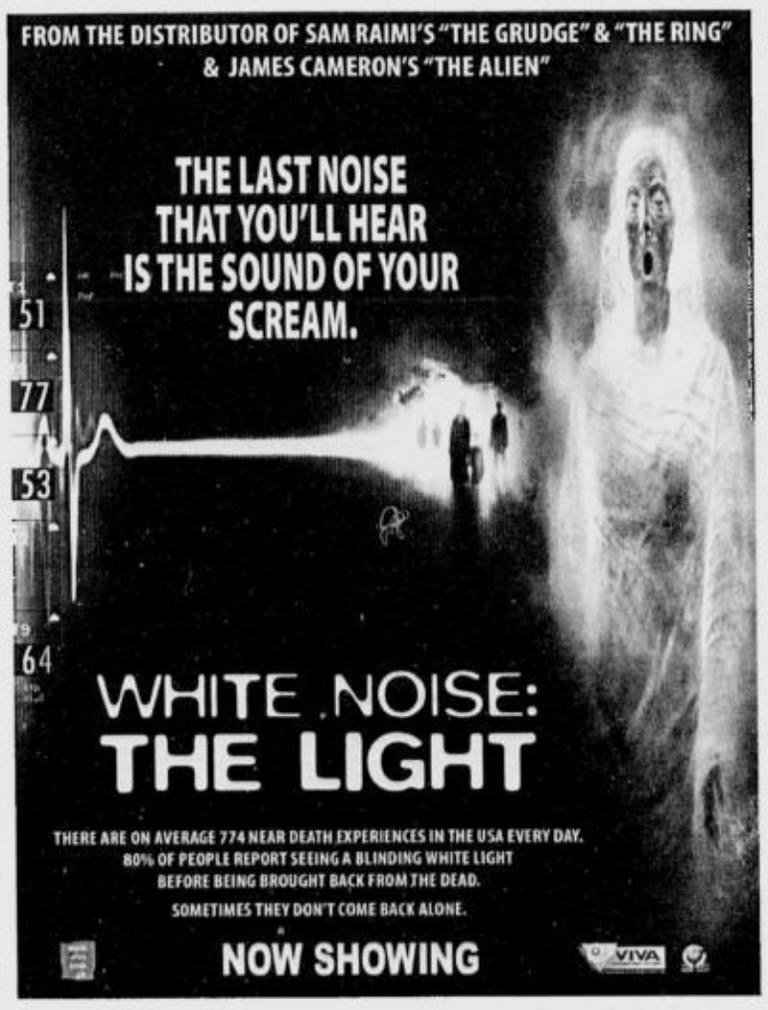

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In their room, the bickering couple finds a cache of homemade slasher films that look disturbingly real. Once they realize the blood-soaked videos were shot in the very room in which they're staying, David and Amy know they will be the sadistic filmmakers next victims unless they put aside their differences and work together to escape.

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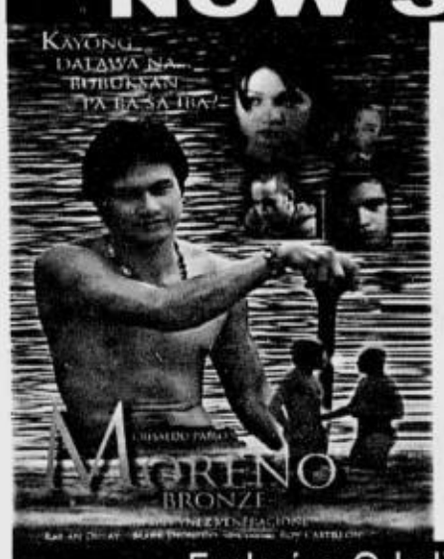


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SOME FIERCELY ROMANTIC people believe that, if two people really love each other, age doesn't matter. So, a 70-year-old man or woman can marry someone young enough to be his/her child or grandchild, and they can expect to be happy up to their last day together.

That may be true for a few people, but in the movies, which are ruled by different standards and expectations, age *does* matter.

On the big screen, lovers pretty much have to be compatible in terms of age, or else viewers will complain.

Why is this so? Because film romance is more idealized than love in real life. Since movie lovers romance each other on a huge screen, minor inconsistencies or physical imperfections are magnified many times over, so lead stars have to look exactly right for

# Requiem for a teacher

From page D1

might think Filipino teachers couldn't cut it. "[But] the supervisors understood]." And the community coped by coming together. "There were a lot of eulogies and prayer meetings. Of course, there were [nasty] rumors and of course, we made sure to squelch them."

"Her students loved her," Gloria said.

"I think they were not told of the details of her passing," Diaz added.

It was particularly "tough" for Bolado's family back in the Philippines, said the filmmaker.

## Wake-up call

"It was a wake-up call for everyone," said Mary Angel Alim, one of Bolado's closest friends and also a Math teacher in Baltimore. "I couldn't believe it myself; I talked to Fe by phone the night before she killed herself."

Alim said they talked about only two things—"love and math." And they made plans to meet up soon.

But her friend had been lonely, Alim admitted. "After her death, some of the Filipino teachers' relatives back home [apparently] realized how important it was for them to support us. My siblings called to tell me that they loved me."

The Pinoy exodus has a price, said Diaz. "[To start with] it fragments families. For most of the teachers, the most compelling reason [for leaving] was financial. They'd rather stay in the Philippines, but they definitely earn more abroad."

Alim estimated that a new teacher would earn P100,000 ($2,222) a year in the Philippines; a veteran, P200,000 ($4,444).

"In the US, the range is from $35,000 to $70,000 annually," Diaz said. "But you must remember that, in the US, these teachers also spend in dollars."

The docu takes an unflinching look at the teachers' travails and triumphs, Diaz said. "It's a snapshot of our time."

# On the brink of global . . .

From page D1

the First Philippine International Music Festival held in Manila in 1995, and the Sound of the Human World Festival in Taiwan, 2004. He was a song interpreter at the Metro Pop Festival in 1998 and 2003.

"Pop Virtuosity" is an independently produced double-CD package of songs in various genres. He calls it his "labor of love." He recalls commuting from Manila to Pampanga to personally peddle it in music outlets.

"I have this dream of recording an all-*kundiman* album," says Reuben. "That would be my way of paying homage to my father, who told me that he would love for me to do that, and also to our musical roots."

After going solo, Reuben says, TV and concert director Floy Quintos told him his advantage over other singers. "He said that, when I perform, I give the song so much nuance, a different flavor." For Reuben, that was a great boost.

From Hollywood, he hopes to return with more feathers in his cap. "Casting agents will be at the WCOPA," he notes. "There will be talent auditions—a good venue for breaking into the international market."

# Age does matter in local movies

VIEWFINDER
Nestor U. Torre

each other.

When exceptions are made, and are accepted by viewers, they tend to feature older men romancing younger women, not the other way around. Thus, male senior stars can have love scenes with sweet, young things without provoking viewers' gag reflex. This is because the global movie industry is controlled by men, so films can reflect *their* fantasies.

## Uneasy viewers

This used to be especially true in the Philippines, where action stars in their 60s paired up with nubile females in their 20s. This strange phenomenon is no longer as evident, because action films are seldom produced these days, but senior comedians still make movie love to very young costars—and get away with it.

In other instances, however, viewers feel uneasy when the lead actress is visibly older than her male partner. This could be one of the reasons that the recent **Regine Velasquez-Piolo Pascual** starrer, "Paano Kita Iibigin," didn't do as well as expected at the tills. On the other hand, when Regine co-starred with the more age-compatible **Robin Padilla**, their movie was a big hit.

In Hollywood, May-December or May-October movies are accepted by viewers, but the same format faces rougher sailing with Filipino moviegoers. There are occasional exceptions, but producers generally avoid the format because they sense that local viewers' idealized expectations of love on the big screen make them leery of movies in which the leading lady looks like the male lead's aunt—or, worse, his mother!

## Informal rule

Other age-related conundrums on the local movie scene: Some young actresses can be accepted by viewers in older roles, like **Hilda Koronel**, who was only 14 years old when she was cast in young-adult romantic dramas that passed her off as a young adult.

Speaking of teen actresses, there seems to be an informal rule on the local movie scene that, at around 17 years of age, sweet young things have to decide whether they want to "change image" and go sexier, or continue to play "good" girls with diminishing returns in terms of new offers coming their way.

Thus, you see the bevy of teen actresses who are currently doing sexy pictorials in men's magazines, hoping to spice up their perceived appeal and thus energize their careers.

Well, it's their choice, but we wish that their options wouldn't be so circumscribed. They can become popular without baring and daring!

Besides, after many starlets go sexy, nothing much happens to their careers—so, why bother?

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WHITE NOISE 2
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PLANET TERROR
12:10 / 2:30 / 4:50 / 7:10 / 9:30
TRANSFORMERS
1:00 / 4:00 / 7:00 / 10:00
DIE HARD 4
1:20 / 4:10 / 7:00 / 9:50
HARRY POTTER 5
12:30 / 3:20 / 6:10 / 9:00
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6 (2:00 (10:00)) TRANSFORMERS
7 (2:00 (10:30)) DIE HARD 4.0
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3 (DOLBY) VACANCY
4 (DOLBY) DIE HARD 4.0

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2 HARRY POTTER - 5
3 VACANCY
4 PLANET TERROR
5 WHITE NOISE - 2

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2 DIE HARD - 5
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4 RESERVED

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2 HARRY POTTER - 5
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4
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2 (2:00) RESERVED
3 (2:00) RESERVED
4 RESERVED
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2 HARRY POTTER - 5
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2 DIE HARD 4.0
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4 (8:15) HARRY POTTER - 5
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1 HARRY POTTER - 5
2 VACANCY
3 (2:00) TRANSFORMERS
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1 BUG
2 TRANSFORMERS
Lianas Cinema (Alabang) tel 850.3276
1 (2:00) HARRY POTTER - 5
2 KAMANDAG NG ROSAS
3 DIE HARD 4.0
4 (8:15) BUG
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1 (2:00) VACANCY
2 CRISANTA
3 (6:00) SHOOTER
4 PAN'S LABYRINTH
5 HARRY POTTER - 5

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# Carmina reviews look-alike's sex video

CARMINA VILLAROEL

**DOLLY WOOD**

*Dolly Anne Carvajal*

JOMARI YLLANA IS ALL AGOG ABOUT HIS biz set to open in August. It has something to do with race cars. That has always been Jom's true passion. Next to **Pops Fernandez**, that is. I cornered him regarding the "monkey issue" of Pipay and **Martin**. Being the true gentleman that Jom is, he's not meddling in Pipay's affairs with her ex. Haven't we all had our share of excesses from our ex-es?

## No stretch marks

**Carmina Villaroel** texted me after she watched the sex video of her dead ringer, which I had forwarded to her: "*Walang* stretch marks *'yung* girl *sa* video. *'Yun ang una kong hinanap*. [Also] straight *ang* hair *niya, hindi* curly like mine. *Nagpapaplantsa lang ako ng* hair when I feel like it."

All the more Mina will have "long hair," now that the controversial sex video has made her even more desirable. Maybe the girl in the video ought to do a porn version of "Impostora."

## No to DJ Mo

RHIAN RAMOS

**Rhian Ramos** fanatics have sent an e-mail to the press saying they will denounce their idol if she continues to see **DJ Mo Twister**. I texted Mo for his reaction, but he hasn't replied at press time. Rhian has denied that there's something going on between them. Although the fans' sentiments are valid, they must also try to understand that they cannot control how Rhian feels. As I always say, fans must learn to accept the stars as persons and not just as personalities. Just like ordinary folk, stars can't help falling for those that their hearts favor. It's better if fans didn't put their idols on too high a pedestal, lest they fall.

## Luke M, producer

My fave *ka-kampai*, **Luke Mejares**, has just released his second album, "Pangako" (Sony BMG). It marks his debut as a producer, too.

"I wanted this album to sound differently," Luke said. "I've put more soul and emotion into the songs, exactly the way my idols, **John Legend** and **Stevie Wonder** do. I listened to a lot of music and soaked up more influences." Included in the album are "You Had Me at Hello," "Yakap Yakap," Luke's composition, "You Should Know," remakes of "With You All the Way" and "I Will Always Stay in Love with You."

Of course, it wouldn't be complete without his signature falsetto, which is featured in the title track, originally by Side A. The album lives up to its title—Luke makes good on his promise to give his all in every song.

## True inspiration

"Ligaw Lihim" is inspired by a true incident at a post office in Negros that stopped operating during the pre-texting era, when people were completely dependent on the mailing system. Letters were neither coming nor going, leaving an unaccounted-for number of corrupted lives.

The must-see indie film will have a special screening at the CCP from July 22 to 28 (log on to www.ligawliham.com for details). Lead actress Karylle says, "I sometimes wish I was a super artsy person but I've never even watched an indie film. I wasn't sure if I wanted to act in one but I'm glad I did ... I saw how artists support each other."

*I-tap-tap mo*, Girl!

## For 'senti' women

**Tintin Bersola** is inviting "senti" women like herself ( I plead guilty to that, too!) to "The Phil. Wedding Congress 2007," July 27 to 29 at the SM Megatrade Hall 2, 5th level, Bldg B. Check out her unique biz of preserving gowns, bouquets, veils, shoes, etc., in shadow boxes and framing them beautifully."

That's what I call bride pride!

*E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.*

## CLICK!

**FIGHTING FOR SURVIVAL.** There is no better symbol of strength and adapting skills than the polar bear. But the frozen expanse of the Arctic, where it thrives, is shrinking at an unprecedented rate. National Geographic Channel follows a team of scientists to the North Pole, in a race against time for the polar bear. "On Thin Ice" premiered last night, and airs again today at 6 a.m.

## KID FIT

**THEY'RE HERE!** "Sesame Street Live!" is ongoing at the Aliw Theater until Sunday, July 22. That's right, all the "people in your neighborhood" are here—Ernie, Count, Elmo, Oscar the Grouch, Cookie Monster, Big Bird and their human friends—to take the stage with educational songs, dances and skits that children from all over the world have loved and enjoyed through the years. Call SM TicketNet outlets, 911-5555 or 374-2222.


AT THE CINEMAS

THX

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729-7777

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| GLORIETTA 1 | 1 WHITE NOISE 2: THE LIGHT | 2 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | 3 PLANET TERROR | 4 DIE HARD 4.0 |
| GLORIETTA 4 | 1 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | 2 VACANCY | 3 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS | |
| | 4 WHITE NOISE 2: THE LIGHT | 5 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN | 6 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | 7 TRANSFORMERS |
| GREENBELT 1 | 1 VACANCY | 2 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | | |
| GREENBELT 3 | 1 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS | 2 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS | | |
| | 3 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS | 4 TRANSFORMERS GUARANTEED SEATS | 5 VACANCY GUARANTEED SEATS | |
| ALABANG TOWN CENTER | 1 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | 2 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | | |
| | 3 TRANSFORMERS | 4 VACANCY | 5 IN THE LAND OF WOMEN | |
| AYALA CENTER CEBU | 1 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | 2 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | 3 VACANCY | 4 NEXT |
| MARKET! MARKET! | 1 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | 2 PLANET TERROR | | |
| | 3 WHITE NOISE 2: THE LIGHT | 4 DIE HARD 4.0 | 5 VACANCY | |
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| | 5 PLANET TERROR | 6 HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX | 7 THX HARRY POTTER & THE ORDER OF THE PHOENIX GUARANTEED SEATS | |

AT THE MALLS

Ayala

CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:
Glorietta - 752 7272
Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

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| glorietta | Avida Home Expo<br>July 20 to 22, 2007 |
| GREENBELT | Brazilian Latino Jazz Night<br>July 18, 2007 at Greenbelt 2 |
| ALABANG TOWN CENTER | Electroworld Exhibit<br>July 13 to 22, 2007 |
| AYALA CENTER CEBU | Accounting Quiz Bowl<br>July 18, 2007 |
| MARKET! MARKET! | BPI Appliance Madness<br>July 6 to 22, 2007 |

OnStage
ONSTAGE - The perfect spot for concerts, stage plays & coporate events is now accepting bookings for May to July 2007
For bookings, pls. call 752-7862 or 757-3861

Ayala MUSEUM
Damian Domingo: The First Great Filipino Painter Exhibit - June 19 to Jan. 8, 2008
Pioneers of Philippine Art - June 15 to January 6, 2008
For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org

TriNoma
BARBIE BIRTHDAY BASH
July 1 (2PM & 4PM) at the Activity Center
HUMAN'S RICO BLANCO EXHIBIT
July 2 to 15 (Mall Hours) at the 1st Level Exhibit Area

AYALA MALLS CINEMAS STARGAZING
Meet & greet the stars of
OUIJA
Jolina Magdangal
Judy Ann Santos
& other surprise guest celebrities
July 19, 2007 Thursday
5:30 PM
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Reserved seats for the first 200 moviegoers who will present any movie tickets purchased in any Ayala Malls Cinemas on the day of the event.

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Glorietta Activity Center
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11:30 am, 3 pm & 6 pm

TriNoma
Activity Center
August 3-5
11:30 am, 3 pm & 6 pm

Market! Market!
Activity Center
August 10-12
1 pm, 3:30 pm & 6 pm

Alabang Town Center
Activity Center
August 17-19
11 am, 3 pm & 6 pm

Ayala Center Cebu
OnStage
August 24-26
1 pm, 4 pm & 6:30 pm

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